



# *Middle managers' journey of diversity policy implementation*

**Author:**

*Hassan Shakeri*

*Master student Business Administration at Radboud University Nijmegen*

*This study is conducted on behalf of the Municipality of Nijmegen*



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Contact details author: hassanshakeri3@hotmail.com  
Student number: s4648412

Institution: Radboud University Nijmegen  
Department: Nijmegen School of Management  
Study: Business Administration (SHRM)  
Module: Master thesis  
Theme: Diversity  
Date: 19 June 2017  
Supervisor: prof. dr. Y.W.M. Benschop  
2<sup>nd</sup> Examiner: dr. J. J. L. E. Bückler

Execution research: Gemeente Nijmegen  
Mariënborg 30  
6511 PS Nijmegen

## **Preface**

Make diversity in the workforce more valuable: this study will help science and organizations to further understand diversity management. The middle manager is investigated in this study as case to understand the challenges of middle managers in implementing diversity policies. This study is conducted as part of my master's degree in Business Administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen. Besides, this study is conducted on behalf of the Municipality of Nijmegen. A period of five months was needed to complete this study.

During my work experience, as a HR manager, I found out that middle managers are generally reluctant to implement diversity policies. After reading about the challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers in the previous studies, I decided to research these challenges in the context of this study. A qualitative research approach is used to identify these challenges. I had access to powerful expertise of Petra Kalkman, from the Municipality of Nijmegen, and prof. dr. Yvonne Benschop, from the Radboud University Nijmegen. Their expertise increased the research quality.

Concerning this study, I would like to thank some persons. First, I would like to thank Petra Kalkman and Yvonne Benschop for their support and time, and for their suggestions. Second, I would like to thank Bettina Haarbosch from NS for NS' participation in this study and for her effort and time to find the right middle managers. Third, I would like to thank all the middle managers for their effort in this study. Fourth, I would like to thank my colleagues Robin Maassen, Josje van Loon and Liezelot Tromp for the peer review. Lastly, I would like to thank dr. Joost Bückler for his good suggestions. Your contribution helped me to look critical to my study and the research process, which increased the quality of my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. They supported me a lot during this study. They provided me with enough time and space to work on this study and enabled me to achieve the results on time. Besides, they encouraged me a lot in the hard times.

I wish you a pleasant and educative trip in the middle managers' journey of diversity policy implementation.

Hassan Shakeri

Nijmegen, 19 June 2017

## Summary

The working population is getting increasingly diverse based on age, gender, ethnicity, et cetera. Diversity is therefore becoming more interesting for organizations. Diversity is about the differences of persons based on the categories race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education and religious/ spiritual orientation. Organizations have diversity policies to achieve and manage diversity. This diverse workforce helps organizations to achieve better organizational performance (business case) and to satisfy the social needs of stakeholders (social justice). The output of these policies depends among others on middle managers, because the flattening of hierarchies and the devolution of some human responsibilities made middle managers responsible for implementing diversity policies. However, studies in UK's retail and IT industry indicated that middle managers encounter five challenges in the implementation of diversity policies:

- Middle managers do not take (sufficient) diversity actions because they are confused about the concept of diversity.
- Middle managers are not decently trained for their diversity responsibilities.
- Middle managers are not held accountable for their diversity practices.
- Middle managers are less involved in the construction of diversity policies.
- Middle managers have more priority for operational targets instead of diversity targets.

The aforementioned diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers could be different in every country because of political, social, economic, legal and historical contexts of every country. The aim of this study is to contribute to the diversity theory by describing in this research context which challenges of diversity policy implementation middle managers encounter and how middle managers deal with these challenges. The following central question will be answered to achieve this aim:

*Which challenges do middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how do middle managers think they should deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity?*

The middle manager is taken as case to answer the research question. This middle manager deals with the operational HR tasks, such as coaching subordinates, recruiting and selecting new employees for his/her department, conducting evaluation interview, et cetera. In total 15 middle managers took part in the qualitative semi-structured interview. These middle managers

works for the Municipality of Nijmegen or NS (Dutch rail transport operator). The fact that diversity is a broad term, this study only focuses on diversity category gender, ethnicity and age.

Middle managers describe in this study five diversity policy implementation challenges:

- **Rules and procedures.** Rules and procedures cause implementation problems because rules and procedures make that middle managers should take extra effort to achieve diversity and rules and procedures diminish middle managers' involvement in achieving and maintaining diversity.
- **Lack of priority.** The challenges that middle managers face lies on lack of priority. The middle managers' low priority is caused because of fewer experience with diversity in working environment, priority for operational targets because of sufficient diversity targets, preferring candidate with the best abilities, difficulties with combining work and diversity responsibilities at the same time and encouraging socialization and internalization of organizations' norms and values instead of diversity targets.
- **Supply side factors.** Middle managers face challenges because of fewer diverse candidates in the labour market, less diverse population and fewer vacancies caused by the economic instability of the organization.
- **Demand side factors.** Low mobility and low employee turnover in combination with fewer vacancies make that middle managers face challenges in the implementation of diversity policies.
- **Managers' skills.** Middle managers lack of ability and knowledge about diversity management cause challenges in the implementation of diversity policies.

Middle managers name several diversity actions to deal with the above challenges. To create more priority for diversity, middle managers argue that top managers and politicians should promote diversity. They also argue that the following solutions are needed to maintain priority for diversity: tailor-made approach, which means that diversity is approximated on small scale, diversity as standard agenda item in the management consultations, use public relation channels, ambassadors, conversations and diversity networks, held middle managers accountable for their diversity practices and appoint a diversity department or practioner. Priority for diversity is not enough. Middle managers state that a diversity policy is needed to integrate diversity in the organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization. This policy should at least consist of a diversity vision, should be sustainable, should be based on the whole organization, should give

preferential right to a certain diversity category and should monitor diversity efforts. In this way, this policy will solve all the aforementioned challenges. Concerning the demand side factors middle managers argue that mobility should be stimulated. According to the middle managers, this mobility should be achieved via internships, work experience jobs, temporal contracts and redundancy packages, via conversations with employees and via regrouping the team composition. Middle managers argue that supply side challenges and managers' skills for diversity management can be improved with collaboration of institutions or organizations that help the minority, the diversity category itself and employees in the organization because of their network. Middle managers' skills get also improved via diversity training, middle managers' previous experiences and employee conversations. To solve the diversity policy implementation challenge rules and procedures, middle managers argue that more managerial involvement is needed.

Based on the above results, the conclusion can be made that middle managers face diversity policy implementations challenges because of themselves and organizations' environment and organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization. In order to deal with these challenges, middle managers prefer first-order actions (minor improvements that do not change the culture, functioning process and structure of the organization) and second-order actions (major improvements that do change the culture, functioning process and structure of the organization). In particular, middle managers need second-order actions in combination with high managerial involvement to succeed in their diversity responsibilities.

This study contributes to the theory by middle managers providing rules and procedures, factors on supply and demand side and lack of diversity management skills as new diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle manager. Middle managers also provide new reasons for diversity policy implementation challenge lack of priority, namely diversity is less important for the middle managers in case of sufficient diversity targets, middle managers find it hard to combine operational and diversity responsibilities at the same time and socialization and internalization of organizations' norms and values has more priority for the middle managers than achieving a diverse team. In addition, middle managers provide their perception about the impact of first and second-order actions on the implementation of diversity policies. According to the middle managers, second-order actions stimulate them in their diversity responsibilities, because diversity-friendly culture make middle managers more aware of diversity and it pushes them to continually achieve and maintain diversity. Middle managers also argue that second-order actions will work in combination with high managerial

involvement. Finally, this study contributes to the theory by middle managers providing actions for diversity policy implementation challenges in the theory. First, the theory argues that middle managers are not trained decently. Middle managers make in this study clear which knowledge and training they need exactly to succeed in his/her diversity management responsibilities. Second, the theory argues that middle managers are less involved in the construction of diversity policies. Middle managers indicate in this study that they only want to be heard about their challenges in day-today practice with regard to diversity. Finally, the theory argues that challenges in the implementation of diversity policies is caused by missing accountability. Middle managers reveal in this study that they need accountability for diversity to maintain priority for diversity and that punishment is not desirable if their outcomes are not sufficient due to acceptable reasons.

Future studies should conduct a quantitative study in the Netherlands to test the diversity policy implementation challenges of the theory and this study. This quantitative study should also test the influence of the two elements of diversity management and organizational size on challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle manager. Besides, qualitative research should be used to describe the diversity implementation challenges by middle managers in the diversity category disability and sexual orientation.

Practical recommendations are made to the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS and the middle managers. The Municipality of Nijmegen and NS should collaborate with the top managers and politicians, depict diversity results on department level, have a diversity policy that values individual and group-based differences rather than valuing equality and at least consists of mentioning what diversity means for the organization, what the purpose of achieving diversity is and how the organization want to achieve diversity. In addition, both organizations are recommended to evaluate diversity on organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization, appoint diversity ambassadors, make diversity an item in the management consultation and performance appraisal, stimulate mobility via internships, work experience jobs, redundancy packages and temporal jobs, collaborate with institutions and organizations that know the minorities, the diversity category itself and the employees of the organization, organize constantly diversity training and involve middle managers by hearing their experiences in day-today practice.

Middle managers are suggested to collaborate with diversity professionals and ambassadors, institutions and organizations that support the minorities, the diversity category itself and employees in the organization. Middle managers are also suggested to initiate

Shakeri (2017)

conversations about diversity in the management consultations, follow diversity training and organize diversity workshop and training for their department.



## **Dutch summary**

De arbeidsmarkt anno nu is veel meer diverse. Derhalve zijn veel bedrijven druk in de weer met diversiteit. Diversiteit gaat over de verschillen van mensen gebaseerd op de categorieën ras, etniciteit, taal, seksuele oriëntatie, geslacht, leeftijd, beperking, status, opleiding en religieuze achtergrond. Organisaties ontwikkelen diversiteitsbeleid om diverse personeelsbestand te creëren en behouden. Dit diverse personeelsbestand helpt organisaties om beter te presteren (business case) en om te voldoen aan de sociale verplichtingen van stakeholders (social justice). Het resultaat van het diversiteitsbeleid is onder andere afhankelijk van de middenmanagers, want plattere organisaties en decentralisatie van HR taken maken dat middenmanagers verantwoordelijk zijn voor de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid. Studies in Verenigd Koninkrijk tonen aan dat middenmanagers in retail- en ICT-industrie vijf uitdagingen tegenkomen in de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid:

- Middenmanagers weten meestal niet wat er met diversiteit wordt bedoeld, waardoor zij geen actie ondernemen.
- Middenmanagers zijn niet voldoende getraind voor hun diversiteitstaken.
- Middenmanagers zijn niet verantwoordelijk gesteld voor hun diversiteitstaken.
- Middenmanagers zijn weinig betrokken bij de ontwikkeling van diversiteitsbeleid.
- Middenmanagers geven meer prioriteit aan operationele doelen ten opzichte van diversiteitsdoelen.

De bovengenoemde uitdagingen van middenmanagers kunnen variëren in elk land vanwege politieke, sociale, economische, wettelijke en historische context van het land. Het doel van deze studie is om bij te dragen aan de diversiteitstheorie door in deze onderzoekscontext te beschrijven welke uitdagingen middenmanagers tegenkomen in de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid en hoe middenmanagers met deze uitdagingen omgaan. De volgende onderzoeksvraag staat centraal in deze studie:

*Welke uitdagingen beschrijven middenmanagers in de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid en hoe denken middenmanagers met deze uitdagingen om te gaan om de social justice en business case doelen van diversiteit te behalen?*

De middenmanager is als case genomen om de onderzoeksvraag te beantwoorden. Deze middenmanager is in de dagelijkse praktijk verantwoordelijk voor de operationele HR-taken, zoals het coachen van werknemers, werving en selecteren van nieuwe medewerkers, voeren

van functioneringsgesprekken et cetera. In totaal hebben 15 middenmanagers deelgenomen aan de kwalitatieve semigestructureerd interviews. Deze middenmanagers werken voor de Gemeente Nijmegen of NS. Omdat diversiteit een breed begrip is, beperkt deze studie zich alleen tot de diversiteitscategorie geslacht, etniciteit en leeftijd.

Middenmanagers beschrijven in dit onderzoek vijf uitdagingen voor de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid:

- **Regels en procedures.** Regels en procedures veroorzaken problemen in de implementatie, omdat middenmanagers dan meer inspanning moeten verrichten om diversiteit te bereiken en regels en procedures de betrokkenheid van middenmanagers verkleinen.
- **Gebrek aan prioriteit.** Middenmanagers ervaren problemen met implementatie omdat ze minder prioriteit verlenen aan diversiteit. Het gebrek aan prioriteit wordt veroorzaakt door weinig ervaring met diversiteit in het werkveld, prioriteit voor operationele doelen omdat diversiteitsdoelen al zijn behaald, het focus op kandidaten met de beste competenties te leggen, moeilijkheden met het combineren van werk- en diversiteitstaken op hetzelfde moment en meer aandacht te hebben voor socialisatie en internalisatie van de normen en waarden van de organisatie in plaats van diversiteitsdoelen.
- **Factoren aan aanbodzijde.** Middenmanagers ervaren uitdagingen omdat de arbeidsmarkt en de populatie minder divers is en omdat de organisatie in een tijd van economische instabiliteit weinig vacatures heeft.
- **Factoren aan vraagzijde.** Lage mobiliteit en laag personeelsverloop in combinatie met weinig vacatures maken dat middenmanagers uitdagingen ervaren in de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid.
- **Managementvaardigheden.** Middenmanagers beschikken over weinig kennis en kunde om diversiteit te managen. Dit maakt dat middenmanagers uitdagingen ervaren in de implementatie.

Middenmanagers noemen verschillende oplossingen voor de bovengenoemde uitdagingen. Middenmanagers zijn van mening dat topmanagers en politici diversiteit moeten promoten om meer prioriteit te creëren. Daarnaast geven zij aan welke oplossingen zij nodig hebben om die prioriteit voor diversiteit te behouden, namelijk het presenteren van cijfers over diversiteit op klein schaal, het opnemen van diversiteit als standaard agendapunt in de managementoverleggen, het gebruiken van marketingkanalen, ambassadeurs, gesprekken en

diversiteitsnetwerken, middenmanagers verantwoordelijk stellen voor hun inspanningen en het aanstellen van een diversiteitsafdeling of -professional. Middenmanagers geven aan dat een diversiteitsbeleid nodig is om diversiteit te integreren in de waarden of missie, cultuur, functioneel proces en structuur van de organisatie. Dit beleid moet volgens de middenmanagers ten minste bestaan uit een visie voor diversiteit, moet duurzaam zijn, moet afgeleid zijn van de hele organisatie, moet voorkeurspositie aan een bepaald diversiteitscategorie mogelijk maken en moet diversiteitsacties monitoren. Het diversiteitsbeleid lost hiermee alle implementatieuitdagingen van middenmanagers op. Wat betreft de factoren aan de vraagzijde dient de mobiliteit gestimuleerd te worden via stages, werkervaringsplaatsen, tijdelijke contracten en vrijwillige vertrekregelingen. Ook leiden gesprekken met medewerkers en het hergroeperen van teams tot mobiliteit volgens de middenmanagers. Voor de uitdaging factoren aan de aanbodzijde geven middenmanagers aan dat samenwerking met instanties en organisaties die minderheden steunen, de diversiteitscategorie zelf en de netwerk van zittende medewerkers nodig is. De samenwerking met deze groepen is net als diversiteitstrainingen, eerdere ervaringen van middenmanagers en gesprekken met medewerkers nodig om de vaardigheden van de middenmanagers te verbeteren. Om de regels en procedures van de organisatie aan te laten sluiten op diversiteit willen middenmanagers meer betrokkenheid.

Op basis van de resultaten kan er geconcludeerd worden dat de middenmanagers eerder neigen de oorzaken van de uitdagingen in de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid te leggen bij de omgeving en missie of visie, cultuur, functioneel proces en structuur van de organisatie, terwijl zij zelf ook de oorzaak zijn van deze uitdagingen. Om deze uitdagingen tegen te gaan, prefereren middenmanagers zowel first-order acties (kleine verbeteringen die geen gevolgen hebben voor de cultuur, het functioneel proces en de structuur van de organisatie) als second-order acties (grote verbeteringen die wel gevolgen hebben voor de cultuur, het functioneel proces en de structuur van de organisatie). Middenmanagers menen in het bijzonder de second-order acties in combinatie met veel betrokkenheid nodig te hebben om te slagen in hun diversiteitstaken.

Deze studie draagt bij aan de bestaande theorie doordat middenmanagers regels en procedures, factoren aan de vraag- en aanbodzijde en managementvaardigheden als nieuwe uitdagingen van implementatie beschrijven. Middenmanagers geven ook nieuwe redenen voor het gebrek aan prioriteit voor diversiteit. Deze nieuwe redenen zijn dat middenmanagers diversiteit geen prioriteit toekennen als diversiteitsdoelen zijn behaald, middenmanagers moeite hebben met het combineren van werk- en diversiteitstaken op hetzelfde moment en middenmanagers socialisatie en internalisatie belangrijker vinden dan diversiteit. Bovendien

geven middenmanagers inzicht in hun percepties met betrekking tot de invloed van first- en second-order acties op de implementatie van diversiteitsbeleid. Middenmanagers geven namelijk aan dat second-order acties ze helpen om hun diversiteitsdoelen te behalen, omdat ze dan meer bewust zijn van diversiteit en gedwongen worden om continue diversiteit te creëren en behouden. Ook geven ze aan dat second-order acties werken in combinatie met veel betrokkenheid. Als laatste geven middenmanagers een aantal oplossingen voor de uitdagingen van de theorie. Ten eerste geeft de theorie aan dat managers niet voldoende zijn getraind voor diversiteitsmanagement. Middenmanagers geven in deze studie aan welke kennis en training zij nodig hebben. Ten tweede geeft de theorie aan dat middenmanagers weinig worden betrokken bij het ontwikkelen van diversiteitsbeleid. Middenmanagers geven in deze studie aan dat hun uitdagingen gehoord moet worden voor het ontwikkelen van diversiteitsbeleid. Ten slotte zegt de theorie dat de uitdagingen van de implementatie veroorzaakt zijn door een gebrek aan verantwoordelijkheid bij de middenmanagers. In deze studie geven middenmanagers aan dat verantwoordelijkheid ervoor zorgt dat de prioriteit voor diversiteit behouden blijft. Echter geven ze ook aan dat ze niet gestraft moeten worden als de resultaten niet worden gehaald door billijke redenen.

Voor verder onderzoek is aanbevolen om een kwantitatief onderzoek uit te voeren in Nederland om de uitdagingen van de theorie en deze studie te testen. Dit onderzoek moet dan ook de invloed van de twee elementen van diversiteitsmanagement en bedrijfsgrootte meten. Bovendien wordt aanbevolen om via een kwalitatief onderzoek de uitdagingen voor de diversiteitscategorie seksuele oriëntatie en beperking te onderzoeken.

Naar aanleiding van deze studie zijn aanbevelingen gedaan aan de Gemeente Nijmegen en NS en de middenmanager. De Gemeente Nijmegen en NS moeten met de topmanagers en politici samenwerken, resultaten van diversiteit op afdelingsniveau in kaart brengen en een diversiteitsbeleid hebben die recht doet aan de individuele en groepsverschillen. Het beleid moet ook aangeven wat de organisatie verstaat onder diversiteit, wat het doel is van diversiteit en hoe de organisatie dit doel denkt te bereiken. Bovendien moeten de Gemeente Nijmegen en NS hun waarden en missie, cultuur, functioneel proces en structuur evalueren op diversiteit, ambassadeurs voor diversiteit benoemen, diversiteit een standaard agendapunt maken in de managementoverleggen en beoordelingsgesprekken, mobiliteit stimuleren via stages, werkervaringsplaatsen, vrijwillige vertrekregelingen en tijdelijke contracten, samenwerken met instanties en organisatie die minderheden steunen, het diversiteitsdoelgroep zelf en de medewerkers van de organisatie, constant diversiteitstrainingen organiseren en

middenmanagers meer betrekken door hun ervaringen over de dagelijkse praktijk mee te nemen in de ontwikkeling van diversiteitsbeleid.

Middenmanagers worden aanbevolen om met diversiteitsprofessionals en ambassadeurs, instanties en organisaties die minderheden steunen, het diversiteitsdoelgroep zelf en bestaande medewerkers samen te werken. Middenmanagers worden ook aanbevolen om gesprekken over diversiteit te initiëren in de managementoverleggen, diversiteitstrainingen te volgen en diversiteitstrainingen en -workshops te organiseren voor het eigen team.

## Table of contents

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	16
1.1 Problem context .....	16
1.2 Aim of the study.....	18
1.3 Theoretical and practical relevance.....	18
1.4 Operational definitions.....	19
1.5 Research outline.....	19
Chapter 2: Theoretical framework .....	20
2.1 Diversity management .....	20
2.2 Elements of diversity management .....	20
2.3 The normative context of diversity management and middle managers implementing diversity policies .....	22
2.4 The way diversity management is done and middle managers implementing diversity policies .....	23
2.5 Five challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers.....	24
2.6 Theory reflection.....	25
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	29
3.1 Case study .....	29
3.2 Municipality of Nijmegen.....	29
3.3 NS .....	30
3.4 Research type .....	32
3.5 Interview .....	33
3.6 Case selection.....	34
3.7 Data analysis .....	35
3.8 Limitations .....	36
3.9 Research quality.....	37
Chapter 4: Results .....	40
4.1 Diversity policy implementation challenges.....	40
4.2 How to deal with challenges .....	51
Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion .....	65
5.1 Discussion .....	65
5.2 Conclusion .....	67
5.3 Theoretical and practical recommendations .....	67
References .....	71
Appendix .....	77
Annex 1a: Example research invitation mail to middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen.....	78

Annex 1b: Example research invitation mail to NS.....	79
Annex 2: Interview guide.....	81
Annex 3: Results preliminary investigation of the team composition in departments of the Municipality of Nijmegen.....	88
Annex 4: Table analyzing research data .....	90

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Problem context

Organizations from the 21st century should make the difference. It is now or never. Nowadays, societies are becoming increasingly diverse (Lowman, 2013; Finkelman and Lopez, 2012). Workforce 2000 predicted that by 2000, white male employees would be the minority of new entrants to the workforce (Kirton and Greene, 2016). The diverse society reflects in the Dutch labour market due to increase in the female working population, disabled working population and non-western working population (CBS, 2016; CBS, 2017; Rijksoverheid, 2015). This trend prompted widespread discussion in the business and academic forums of the greater need for organizations to recognize the importance of diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2016). The basic concept of diversity accepts the diverse population of persons in the workforce (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998). These differences of persons are based on categories such as, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education, religious/ spiritual orientation, and other cultural dimensions (American Psychological Association, 2002). According to Kandola and Fullerton (1998): “Harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organizational goals are met” (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 127).

Organizations have several reasons for promoting diversity. A distinction can be made between business case reasoning and social justice reasoning (Adserias, Charleston and Jackson, 2016, p. 2). Social justice reasoning strives with diversity for equal treatment for everyone by focusing on diversity-related power struggles and implementing interventions to stimulate equal treatment (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 116-118). In the business case reasoning, organisations have or achieve a diverse workforce because they are convinced that diversity results into better organizational performance (Adserias et al, 2016, p. 2). Examples of such organizational performance are average earnings before interest and tax (Hunt, Layton and Prince, 2015) and employee productivity (also mentioned as net income per employee) (Richard, 2000, p. 169). Research of Hunt, Layton and Prince (2015) shows that gender or racial diversity creates better organizational performance (measured as average earnings before interest and tax 2010-2013) for organizations in the United Kingdom, Canada, Latin America, and the United States. The reason for this improved organizational performance is that diverse organizations are better able to win top talent and improve their customer orientation. Other reasons for the improving organizational performance are high employee satisfaction and better decision making (Hunt et al., 2015). Organizations strive diversity in the workforce through



diversity policies. These policies consist of diversity-related actions (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 4) such as recruit and select employees with a non-western background (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 215-216).

Policy making starts with recognizing and defining the problem (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 45) and then based on the degree of importance and/or urgency the problem will get a certain level of attention from the concerning persons (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 46-47). When the problem has a high level of attention according to the concerning persons, a policy will be formulated (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 48). This policy formulation includes the goals of the policy and the consideration of different actions to tackle the problem (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 48). The next stage is the policy implementation where the actions of the policy will be executed to achieve the policy goals (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 51; Durlak and DuPre, 2008, p. 329). The last stage is the evaluation stage where the outcomes of the policy actions are evaluated. These outcomes depend on the way the policy is implemented. As a result of the evaluation, the policy can be (partly) terminated if there are shortcomings on the policy (Jann and Wegrich, 2007, p. 53).

This above described policy-making principle can be translated to the diversity policies, because achieving the social justice and/or business case goals of diversity policies depends on how these policies are implemented (Lau Chin et al., 2016; Kirton and Greene, 2016; Adserias et al., 2016). The flattening of organizational hierarchies and the devolution of some human resources responsibilities made middle managers responsible for implementing diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Adserias et al., 2016). A study on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour into five Dutch companies revealed that leadership is crucial for achieving the social justice and business case goals of diversity and that diversity responsibilities should be assigned to middle managers, because they have a key part in the implementation of diversity policies (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). However, middle managers encounter five challenges with implementing diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Kirton, Robertson and Avdelidou-Fischer, 2016). First, middle managers are confused about the concept of diversity and how this translates into meaningful roles for them in diversity policy implementation. Second, middle managers are not decently trained for their diversity management responsibilities. Third, the accountability of middle managers for their own diversity practices is missing. Fourth, middle managers are not often involved in the constructing of diversity policies. Finally, operational targets have more priority for the middle managers in comparison with the diversity targets (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 205-207; Kirton et al., 2016). These aforementioned challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle

managers are indicated in the UK's retail and IT industry (Foster and Harris, 2005, p. 7; Kirton et al., 2016, p. 323). According to Kirton and Greene (2016), the diversity concerns of a country is not entirely transferable in the other countries because of political, social, economic, legal and historical contexts of every country (p. 7-8). Thus, it is possible that middle managers in other countries could deal with other or more diversity policy implementation challenges. The contextual differences (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 7-8) and the lack of scientific research (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 14) into the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers require further research into the challenges that middle managers face in the implementation of diversity policies.

### **1.2 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to contribute to the diversity theory by describing in this research context which challenges of diversity policy implementation middle managers encounter and how middle managers deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity. The aim of this study will be achieved by answering the following central questions:

*Which challenges do middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how do middle managers think they should deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity?*

### **1.3 Theoretical and practical relevance**

The theoretical relevance of this study is that the insights elaborates on the study of Adserias et al. (2016) and Van Beek and Henderikse (2015) by addressing the role of middle managers in leading the implementation of the diversity agenda. This study also enriches the diversity literature by describing the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers within this research context, because according to Kirton and Greene (2016) differences in political, social, economic, legal and historical contexts of countries make sure that diversity concerns are not entirely transferable to other countries.

With regard to the practical relevance of this study, the results of this study will support Dutch organizations in the implementation of diversity policies, because a study on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour showed that middle managers' role is crucial to achieve the business case and social justice goals of diversity (Rijksoverheid, n.d.).

#### **1.4 Operational definitions**

Some terms in this study require a framework, because these terms are broad or used in different ways. This framework provides clarity about what these terms refer to in this study.

The first term is diversity. Diversity is about the differences of persons based on the categories race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education and religious/ spiritual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2002). In this study, diversity refers to diversity categories age, gender and ethnicity.

The second term is the diversity category ethnicity. This term is used in different ways (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 29). Studies use origin (country of birth) and descent (parents' country of birth) to mention ethnicity (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 29). In this study, ethnicity refers to persons' country of birth and parents' and grandparents' country of birth and it is mentioned in the report as people with non-western background.

#### **1.5 Research outline**

The outline of this research report is as follows: the next chapter, theoretical framework, starts with discussing the theories about diversity management. The theoretical framework will then continue with theories about the implementation of diversity policy by the middle managers. After the theory description, a detailed picture will be given of the research design and methods of data collection in chapter three. The middle manager is used as a case to collect data via semi-structured interviews. These middle managers work for the Municipality of Nijmegen or NS. The results of the interviews will be presented in the fourth chapter: 'Results'. Finally, based on the results theoretical contribution, conclusion and theoretical and practical recommendations will be discussed.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Diversity management**

Only having a diverse workforce is not enough to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity. Organizations should also take a policy approach to manage the diverse workforce, also known as diversity management (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 4). Diversity management means: “That organizations can gain in a number of different ways from workforce diversity, and diversity policy is charged with developing initiatives to leverage the benefits” (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 4). Thus, diversity management strategies recognize that differences between persons should be accepted to achieve the goals of diversity (Work Foundation, 2006).

### **2.2 Elements of diversity management**

According to Kremser (n.d.) diversity management consists of two important elements: the normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done (p. 3).

The first element of diversity management, the normative context of diversity management, deals with the reasons why diversity is promoted in organizations (Kremser, n.d., p. 4). As already mentioned in the introduction, reasons to promote diversity in organizations could be based on social justice reasoning and business case reasoning (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 2). In case of social justice reasoning, organizations have a diverse workforce (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010, p. 105) to treat the society equal, because organizations believe that they are social responsible for the society (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010, p. 105; Benschop, 2016, p. 15). This equal treatment could be achieved through equal opportunities for everyone (Kirton and Greene, p. 116). Equality of opportunity exists when all individuals have the same right and access to compete for a certain social rewards like job selection. The focus is hereby more on individuals, where persons should minimize the (group) differences and compete for social rewards solely (Kirton and Greene, p. 116-117). Equal opportunities could be achieved via rules and laws (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 117; Benschop, 2016, p. 15). Another approach of equal treatment is the combination of equality of opportunity and equality of outcome (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 117-118). Alongside the fair procedures for everyone, this approach of equality achieve fair outcomes of social rewards, where the focus is on group differences. For instance, if women are under-represented in senior management jobs, this would be seen as unfair outcome that should be tackled by the diversity policy (Kirton and

Greene, 2016, p. 117-118). Fair outcomes could be achieved via targets, quota and rewards for the whole society (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 117; Benschop, 2016, p. 15). In the business case reasoning, organizations believe that diverse workforce will improve the organizational performance (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010, p. 103). This improving performance is achieved via winning top talent, improving the customer orientation through better customer understanding and customer communication, increased legitimacy, employee satisfaction, and better decision making (Hunt et al., 2015; Jones, 2006).

The second element of diversity management, which is the way diversity management is done, represents the form of actions that organizations take to manage diversity (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 3). These actions could be either first- or second-order (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 3). First-order actions are minor improvements and adjustments that do not change the systems' core (Levy and Merry, 1986). Forms of first-order actions are management trainings, networking with all kind of diversity networks, monitoring diversity outcomes, building minority faculty, make multiculturalism a part of the curriculum, and assign role models for minority groups (Aguirre and Martinez, 2006, p. 56; Kremser, n.d., p. 5). These first-order actions only protect the current organizational culture rather than change it to a more diverse friendly culture (Aguirre and Martinez, 2006, p. 56). Thus, the first-order actions allow an organization to prevent resistance to change certain aspects of the organizational culture (Aguirre and Martinez, 2006, p. 56). Second-order actions are improvements that integrate diversity in the organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization (Kezar, 2001; Kremser, n.d., p. 5). Examples of second-order actions could be creating departments specifically concerned with diversity responsibilities, assigning someone in the organization for diversity responsibilities, taking diversity as an intermediate outcome of organizational design process, and integrate diversity in the underlying values or missions of the organization (Kremser, n.d., p. 5). Second-order actions are effective if the management of an organization outline a shared vision, and the necessary structures and processes through achieving diverse workforce is facilitated (Kezar, 2005, p. 19-20).

This study describes the impact of diversity management on the diversity policy implementation by the middle managers, because the literature provides some insights about the relation of the two elements of diversity management with the diversity policy implementation by the middle managers (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000).

### **2.3 The normative context of diversity management and middle managers implementing diversity policies**

In case of element one (the normative context of diversity management) the implementation motives of the middle managers for diversity policies drives from business case and/or social justice reasoning (Hillman, Shropshire, Albert and Cannella, 2007; Saeed, Belghitar and Yousaf, 2016, p. 1078; Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 12; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000).

In the business case reasoning, middle managers implement diversity policy because they are convinced that a diverse workforce will result into better organizational performance (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Previous studies showed that diverse organizations perform better because of winning the battle for attracting top talent and better customer orientation (Hunt et al., 2015; Jones, 2006). With this improving organizational performance, middle managers are better able to achieve the broader organizational goals (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Middle managers' business imperative of diverse workforce will stimulate them to implement sufficiently diversity policies via specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related (SMART) goals (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 12; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000).

In case of social justice reasoning of diversity management, the underlying notion of middle managers for implementing diversity policy is derived by environmental pressure on organizations for corporate social responsibility via diverse workforce (Hillman, Shropshire, Albert and Cannella, 2007). Hillman et al.'s (2007) state that large organizations have more pressure to achieve the social expectations of the state, media, and professional groups, because large organizations are more visible to their environment (Saeed, Belghitar and Yousaf, 2016, p. 1078).

This paragraph highlighted that the motivation of the middle managers is decisive for implementing diversity policies by the middle managers, definitely, when it comes to achieving sustained benefits with diverse workforce (Jones, 2006, p. 19). The general argument is that middle managers become more committed to implement diversity policies and become more interested in the diversity outcomes if the diversity goals are aligned with broader business goals (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206; Kirton and Greene, 2009, p. 170).

## **2.4 The way diversity management is done and middle managers implementing diversity policies**

With regard to element two of diversity management about first-order and second-order actions, the literature shows that the diversity actions of the middle managers depend on the level to which diversity is integrated in the organizations' culture. Four levels of diversity integration in organization can be distinguished (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 9).

In the first level, diversity is not seen as an institutional priority. There are some few diversity actions for supporting diverse workforce (Williams, 2013).

In the second level, diversity is getting more important in the way that diversity is a point of discussion among the middle managers. However, there is no institutional framework or agenda for diversity. Each function in the organization conducts in this level diversity actions isolated (Williams, 2013).

The diversity agenda begins to emerge as a priority in the third level. In this level, middle managers are generally convinced about the benefits of diversity. This strong awareness result into diversity plans to be implemented by the middle managers through diversity actions, however these plans have limited success due to lack of accountability (Williams, 2013). In the first three levels, the diversity actions are characterized as first-order to satisfy the environment's social expectation, despite the lack of evidence that they work (Krawiec, 2003, p. 503-510).

In the fourth and last level, diversity is transformed in the organizational culture and the diversity actions are second-order (Williams, 2013). Williams (2013) states that in this level: "Diversity is defined broadly and exists at the highest level of institutional importance as foundational to mission fulfillment and academic excellence ... [and] has become a cultural value that manifests itself in myriad ways" (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 9-10). According to Rees (1998), diversity should be transformed in the organizational culture to make the implementation of diversity policy by the middle managers successful, rather than legal regulation and bureaucratic procedures, because creating a culture of diversity stimulates persons with boarder range of characteristics to flourish (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 127).

The two elements of diversity management illustrate that achieving the social justice and business case goals of diversity require certain motivation and actions from the middle managers. However, middle managers encounter challenges with implementing diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Kirton et al., 2016).

## **2.5 Five challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers**

In implementing diversity policies, middle managers face five challenges: confusion about the meaning of diversity; lack or poor diversity training; missing accountability for diversity actions, less involvement in policy construction and low priority for diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 205-207; Kirton et al., 2016).

The first challenge is that middle managers are confused about the concept of diversity and how this translates into meaningful roles for them in diversity policy implementation (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 205). For some middle managers diversity means take into account the individual differences, while for other middle managers it means focusing on the group differences, and for other middle managers it means ignoring differences and treat everybody the same (Foster and Harris, 2005). This confusion about the concept of diversity is because of confusion among diversity practitioners about what diversity management means and which diversity goals should be achieved with the diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2009, p. 173-174).

Second, middle manager are not trained and/or not trained appropriately for their diversity management responsibilities (CIPD, 2012a, p. 12). Kirton and Greene's (2009) study reveals the irrelevant content of training often offered to middle managers (p. 171): "It often did not deal with the issue of what diversity management would mean for the everyday job of a middle manager, or how practice would need to change" (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). The lack of proper training to middle managers is also caused by lack of willingness (Jones, 2006, p. 23), because middle managers think that diversity does not have any effect (Kirton et al., 2016, p. 330).

Third, the accountability of middle managers for their own diversity actions is missing (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206), while accountability is an effective way to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity (Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly, 2006, p. 611). CIPD's (2007) study revealed that the embeddedness of diversity is absent within the performance management of middle managers (p. 10-11). Only 20% of the organizations in the UK apply diversity standards (CIPD, 2007, p. 10-11). The study of CIPD (2007) also showed that diversity is part of the performance appraisal of middle managers in only 16% of the organizations in the UK (p. 10-11). Creating the appropriate accountability could be achieved through action plan and goals, appoint a full-time staff member or create diversity department to monitor diversity efforts and/or creating diversity committees from different departments, professional backgrounds and management levels to manage diversity actions and monitor the progress (Kalev et al., 2006, p. 611).



Fourth, middle managers are less involved in the construction of diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). The feeling of ownership of diversity management differs in the various level of managerial hierarchy (CIPD, 2007, p. 14). CIPD's (2007) study revealed that 43% of board members felt ownership for diversity management in their organizations. For the middle manager the feeling of ownership for diversity management declined to 22% (p. 14), while Herzig and Jimmerson (2006) argue that the role of the middle managers is important to achieve a certain change in the organization through policies, because they are influencing the relationship between employees and the organization through influencing the emotions of employees, clarifying the scope of the change beforehand and taking the role of communication facilitator between the management and employees (p. 635-638).

Finally, middle managers give less priority to diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 207). Foster and Harris's (2005) study indicates that achieving other operational targets receive more priority from the middle manager than diversity targets (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 207). The general argument is that middle managers become committed to their diversity policy implementation if the diversity goals are aligned with broader business goals (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). The low priority to diversity is partly caused by the fact that diversity results into costs and disadvantages on the short-term although the benefits of diversity become apparent in the long-term (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 207). Another reason for the low priority for diversity is the lack of awareness of middle managers about the value of diverse workforce (CIPD, 2012a, p. 5; Kirton et al., 2016, p. 333), because middle managers have fewer experiences in working environment with high level of diversity. Other causes for the low priority of middle managers for diversity are the preference for treating everyone equal rather than valuing differences, the fact that deploying diversity is time-consuming in a high-pressure working environment (Kirton et al., 2016, p. 333), and the fact that implementing diversity is seen as a HR issue, not an operational issue (Jones, 2006, p. 23).

## **2.6 Theory reflection**

In reflecting the above insights from the theory, I learned that the normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done effect the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000). I am more aware of the grounds of choices that middle managers make in the implementation of diversity policies. I gained for instance more knowledge about

the fact that middle managers' diversity actions are based on how important diversity is for the organization (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 9).

In the theoretical framework some statements are given about the role of the two elements of diversity management (the normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done) on the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers.

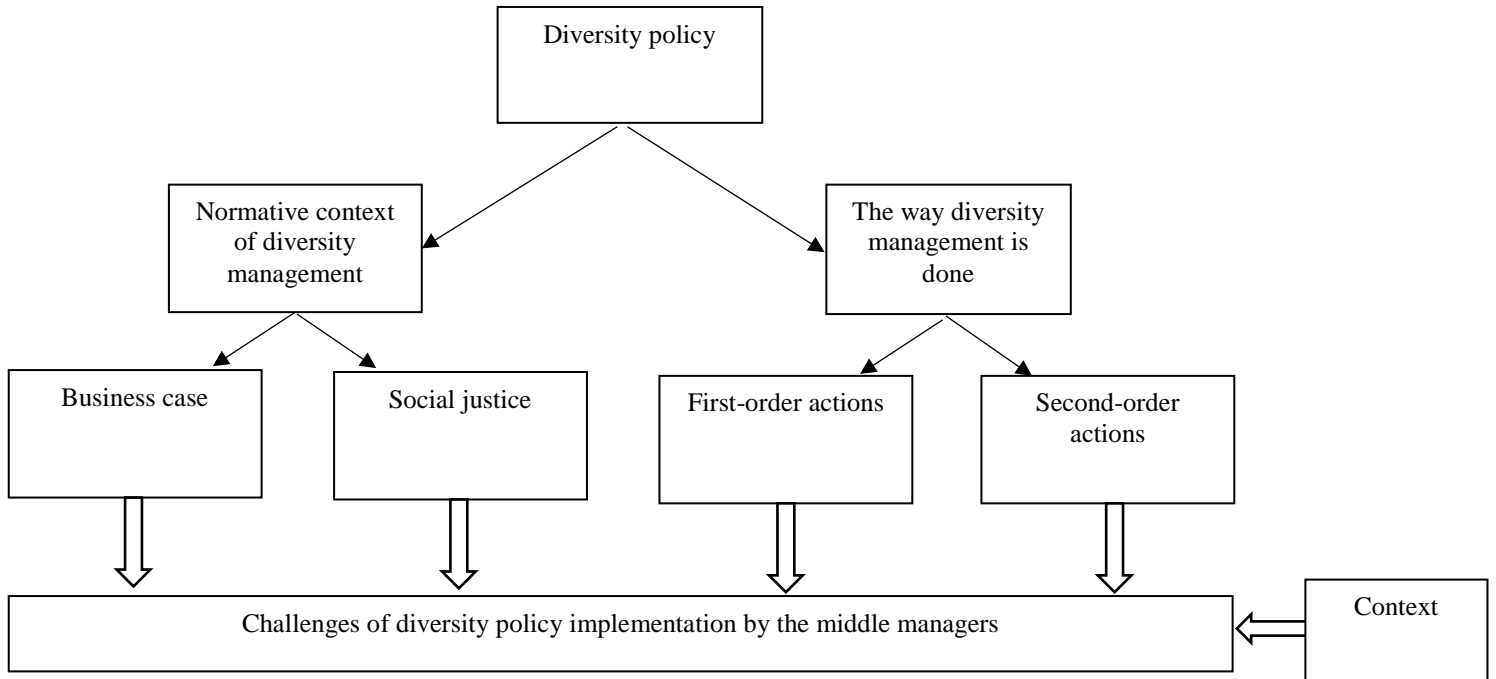
The first statement is that transformation of diversity in the organizational culture is needed to achieve the business case and social justice goals of diversity (Kirton and Green, 2016, p. 127). In my opinion this statement could be right, because I, as a HR manager, experienced that organizations who not transformed diversity in the organizational culture perform from time to time some first-order actions, but after a while the need and sense for diverse workforce become less important and then no more diversity actions are performed. I experienced that these organizations have a short-term focus on diversity for a certain reason. After a while, this reason is not actual or urgent anymore and then the need for a diverse workforce become less important. In my opinion, this has to do with less awareness and/or knowledge about the benefits of diversity for an organization. If organizations are aware and/or had knowledge about the benefits of diversity, they will be more determined to achieve diversity. They would do proper investments in diversity and take actions to maintain diversity.

A second statement is that middle managers become committed to their diversity policy implementation and become more interested in the diversity outcomes if the diversity goals are aligned with broader business goals (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). I believe that the social justice motives are even important as business case motives in the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers, because big and public organizations deal with environmental expectations of stakeholders (Saeed et al., 2016, p. 1078). In case these organizations do not meet these expectations, their organizational image could be damaged (Jones, 2006, p. 17-18), which will affect the organizational performance negatively in the long-term because these organizations are than less attractive for new talents and (potential) customers (Jones, 2006, p. 17-18).

The challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers are investigated in the context of the UK. I think that it is possible that diversity management could be different in other countries, because political circumstances determine which diversity-related law will be entered. For instance, if diversity is a relevant agenda item for the governing party of a certain country, then more diversity-related law will be introduced. The fact that diversity management could be different in every country because of contextual differences

(Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 7-8), makes this study very interesting to further investigate the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers.

Based on the theoretical reflection the following conceptual model (Figure 1) is used for this research:



**Figure 1: Conceptual model**

Diversity as policy approach consist of two elements: the normative context of diversity and the way diversity is done (Figure 1) (Kremser, n.d, p. 3).

The normative context of diversity is about the motives of organizations for having a diverse workforce (Kremser, n.d., p. 4). A distinction can be made between social justice reasoning and business case reasoning (Figure 1) (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 2). In the business case reasoning organizations are striving a diverse workforce, because it improves their organizational performance (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010, p. 103). The social justice reasoning is about achieving a diverse workforce, because organizations believe that everyone deserve an equal chance in the society (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 116-118).

They way diversity is done is about actions to manage diversity (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 3). There are two different forms of diversity actions: first-order and second-order actions (Figure 1) (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 3). First-order actions do not change the organizational culture and underlying vision of the organization but protect the current organizational culture (Aguirre and Martinez, 2006, p. 56; Kremser, n.d., p. 5). In contrast, second-order actions

transform diversity in the organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization (Kezar, 2001; Kremser, n.d., p. 5).

The normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done have a relation with the diversity policy implementation by the middle managers (Figure 1) (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015; Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000). Middle managers implement diversity policies because they are convinced that diversity improves the organizational performance (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Besides, middle managers could have social justice motives to implement diversity policies because of environmental pressure from the stakeholders (Saeed et al., 2016, p. 1078). Previous study shows that middle managers are more convinced about diversity if it result into better organizational performance (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206; Kirton and Greene, 2009, p. 170). In case of first- and second-order actions study showed that middle managers should implement second-order actions to achieve the goals of diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 127). However, middle managers face challenges in the implementation of diversity policies (Figure 1) (Kirton and Greene, 2016; Kirton, Robertson and Avdelidou-Fischer, 2016). Kirton and Greene (2016) argue that these diversity implementation challenges by the middle managers are not entirely the same in every country because of political, social, economic, legal and historical context of countries (Figure 1) (p. 7-8). Therefore, the context of this study will be used to further investigate the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Case study**

In this study, the case study design is chosen to describe which challenges middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how they think they should deal with these challenges, because the context in which diversity policies are implemented could have implications for the challenges that middle managers face. Considering the fact that the context matters, it is important to describe in-depth the perceptions and experiences of middle managers about diversity policy implementation challenges in this research context (Swanborn, 2013, p. 28). In this way, an epistemology stance is chosen. Epistemology studies which criteria belong to a certain reality. This reality is based on observable, measurable, causal variables and antecedent conditions or based on human interpretation derived from the perceptions and experiences of persons (Symon and Cassell, 2012, p. 16-21). This study will provide middle managers' interpretation about his/her diversity policy implementation challenges and how he/she thinks he/she should deal with these challenges. These challenges and diversity actions against the challenges are socially constructed by the middle manager based on his/her perceptions and experiences. The middle manager will mention several criteria, which are the challenges and the diversity actions against these challenges. To investigate these criteria, one case or a small number of cases should be used (Swanborn, 2013, p. 28). For this study, the middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen and the middle managers of NS are the cases. The Municipality of Nijmegen and NS are chosen to describe the influence of the diversity management element 'the way diversity management is done' on the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers, because the Municipality of Nijmegen strive diversity via first-order actions and NS via first and second-order actions.

### **3.2 Municipality of Nijmegen**

The Municipality of Nijmegen is a division of the Dutch government with power of self-government and/or jurisdiction. It governs issues such as education, work, culture, and population affairs for the inhabitants of Nijmegen (Gemeente Nijmegen, n.d.). The organization employs around 1553.9 full-time equivalents (fte) (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017).

The Municipality of Nijmegen took some diversity actions to achieve a diverse workforce over the last 11 years. The organization trained the managers how to deal with prejudices about persons. Besides, in 2006 and 2007 the organization did a pilot with

anonymous applications (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2008a, p. 3). This pilot had no significant effect (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2008a, p. 19). Therefore, the municipality did not introduce this instrument throughout the organization after the pilot. Further, in some vacancies a preference for minorities is expressed. The organization also started a graduate trainee program in 2015 to attract young employees. Besides, the organization provides every year internships. Some of these interns are hired after their internship. These actions had the following effect on the workforce of the Municipality of Nijmegen in 2016 in comparison with 2015: the municipality had more women employees in 2016; the percentage of young employees (younger than 29) increased with 2% to 5.5%; the average age of employees is decreased with 0.3 years to 48.5 years; the number of female managers increased with 2% to 35% (26 female managers) and the number of employees with non-western background remained the same, namely 9% (134 employees) (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017). Currently, the Municipality of Nijmegen is constructing a new diversity policy after a request of the municipal council of Nijmegen for an integral diversity policy in 2016 (Heffels, 2016, p. 9). In this sense, the integral diversity policy means that diversity should be transformed in the organizational process (Heffels, 2016, p. 9). This policy is needed according to the municipal council for several reasons: the labour market should provide equal chances for everyone, inequality of labour market is bad for the economic situation and social cohesion of the region, the current HR policy of the municipality do not pay attention to diversity; the workforce composition is less diverse in the higher hierarchical positions, and the Municipality of Nijmegen should give the right example to other organizations in the region (Heffels, 2016, p. 9).

The middle managers and HR advisors of the Municipality of Nijmegen believe that the organization should strive for more diversity, because it results into a better work climate, more collegiality and better collaboration between employees (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2008a, p. 5). According to these parties, the municipality needs second-order actions to achieve diverse organization instead of minor improvements like anonymous applications (Van Immerzeel, 2017, p. 53).

### **3.3 NS**

NS (Nederlandse Spoorwegen) is a rail transport operator in the Netherlands. The organization employs around 30945 fte (NS, 2016a, p. 11). NS transports daily 1.1 million train travellers across the Netherlands. The turnover of the organization is €5 milliard (NS, 2016a, p. 11).

NS has a diversity policy since 2005 (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 18). NS considers diversity to achieve better organizational performance via better customer communication and better decision-making because of the different abilities of employees. Besides, NS considers diversity to give the right example to its stakeholders (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 19). The organization focuses on the diversity category gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation (People Business, 2015). The diversity strategy of NS is 'focusing'. The organization focuses gradually on the four diversity categories (People Business, 2015; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 18). First, the organization started to focus on gender. The organization wants to attract women in the management positions. Then NS focused on ethnicity. The organization wants to attract talents with non-western background for the organization and for the management positions. Disability is the third diversity category where the organization focused on. NS did diversity actions to attract people with autism. The last step to achieve diversity was via sexual orientation. NS wants to increase the social acceptance for LGBT (People Business, 2015).

NS did several diversity actions to achieve diversity. First, NS integrated diversity in the mission and vision of the organization by mentioning explicitly the words 'hospitable' and 'connecting' (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 19). Second, NS has diversity targets. It has for instance targets for women in the management position (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 21). Third, NS has a diversity department consist of two Diversity Managers and one Program Manager to achieve the diversity targets. Fourth, NS has built diversity networks (People Business, 2015). NS Iron Ladies is the network for diversity category gender, VariationNS is the network for diversity category ethnicity and Trainbow is the network for diversity category sexual orientation (People Business, 2015). Fifth, NS promotes diversity categories through different promotion channels. Employees that are part of a certain diversity category are involved in the promotion activities. In this way, the organization wants to achieve social acceptance for the four diversity categories (People Business, 2015). Sixth, NS provides diversity training to middle managers in order to achieve and manage diversity (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 23). For instance, the middle managers are trained how to select employees with non-western background (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 21). These actions had the following effects on the workforce of NS in 2016 in comparison with 2015: 30% of the senior management is women in comparison with 25% in 2015; 2 of the 4 members of board of directors are women (50%) and 75 persons with disability build work experience in NS in comparison with 40 in 2015 (NS, 2016b).

According to the Diversity Manager of NS it is difficult to reveal the added value of diversity. However NS does not need this confirmation, because the organization is convinced about the added value of diversity (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 19). There is high commitment and involvement for diversity in the top of the organization. However, the organization misses the support from the middle management. The organization is now taking actions to achieve high commitment from the middle management (Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 20).

### **3.4 Research type**

Previous research showed that more research is needed about the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers because of contextual differences and lack of scientific research (Adserias et al., 2016, p. 14; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 9; Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 7-8). In order to gain more insights about the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers, a qualitative research is conducted because qualitative research is appropriate to construct new theories (Bleijenbergh, 2015, p. 20). Besides, the lack of knowledge about the middle managers' challenges in this research context makes a qualitative approach appropriate, because this approach fits perfectly with explorative research (Baarda, 2009, p. 29). A qualitative approach explores which challenges middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how the middle managers think they should deal with these challenges. Further, a qualitative approach is suitable to describe organizational culture (Bleijenbergh, 2015, p. 12). The theory revealed that in the second element of diversity management (the way diversity management is done) organizational culture could play an important role in the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers (Kremser, n.d., p. 6). A qualitative approach could help to describe this role of culture. In addition, a qualitative approach is able to gather data about the opinions, emotions or beliefs of middle managers about diversity policy implementation challenges (Symon & Cassell, 2012). These middle managers' beliefs could influence the way they implement diversity policies.

In order to investigate the diversity policy implementation challenges and the diversity actions against these challenges described by middle managers, a combination of deductive and inductive approach is used. The findings in the theoretical framework are used to investigate which diversity policy implementation challenges middle managers describe in this research context and how middle managers think diversity management is done by providing diversity



actions against the diversity policy implementation challenges. Thus, a conceptual model (Figure 1) underlies the collected research data. For describing the diversity policy implementation challenges, also an inductive approach is used, because little (scientific) knowledge is available about the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers in this research context.

### **3.5 Interview**

A semi-structured interview is used to collect insights about middle managers' diversity policy implementation challenges and how middle managers think they should deal with the challenges. The benefits of semi-structured interview are: it allows addressing the relevant topics from the theoretical framework; it provide flexibility in the sense that the researcher can ask additional questions and adapt the interview to the answers of the interviewees (Bleijenbergh, 2015, p. 74). These benefits are applicable in this study. First, some middle managers mentioned explicitly that they do not know which diversity actions will help them to solve the diversity policy implementation challenges. Sub-questions derived from the theoretical framework helped them to provide diversity actions. Second, middle managers mentioned some terms and information that need some further explanations. The semi-structured interview gave the possibility to ask further on these terms and information to understand these terms and information. Third, middle managers mentioned experiences and perceptions during the interview that need in-depth analysis to provide valid insights. The semi-structured interview made it possible to adapt the interview to the answers of these middle managers.

A questionnaire is made for the semi-structured interview (Annex 2). These questionnaire is based on the insights of the theoretical framework. It consist of five themes: background information, diversity in the organization, diversity in the department, diversity challenges faced by middle managers and best practices middle managers dealing with diversity policy implementation challenges (Annex 2). The first three themes describes the context of this study and the relation of two elements of diversity management (the normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done) on the implementation of diversity policies. The fourth theme (diversity challenges faced by middle managers) describes the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers. The last theme (best practices middle managers dealing with diversity policy implementation challenges) describes

middle managers' opinion about how to deal with the diversity policy implementation challenges.

The unit of analysis is the middle manager working in the Municipality of Nijmegen or NS and his/her experiences and perceptions about the diversity policy implementation challenges and how to deal with these challenges. In this way, the implementation of diversity policies can be analysed as experienced by individuals in order to determine knowledge about the research problem. Thus, the middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS are the cases. These middle managers deal with the operational HR tasks, such as coaching subordinates, recruiting and selecting new employees for his/her department, conducting evaluation interview and much more. In short, these middle managers are responsible for the implementation of the HR policies in the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS.

### 3.6 Case selection

The cases (middle managers) are selected on the following two criteria:

- **Team composition on diversity categories:** This study focuses on the diversity category age, ethnicity and gender, because the study of Witkamp, Van der Woude and Klaver (2016) shows that diversity management could differ based on the diversity categories age, gender and ethnicity (p. 35-36). Therefore, the middle managers are selected on their team composition on diversity category age, ethnicity and gender.
- **Middle managers:** Only the middle managers that are responsible for operational HR tasks, such as coaching subordinates, recruiting and selecting new employees for his/her department, conducting evaluation interview and much more, are relevant for this study.

These criteria are used for the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS in a different way to select the cases.

#### *The Municipality of Nijmegen*

A preliminary investigation of the employee composition in every department of the Municipality of Nijmegen is done via Excel to chart which middle managers are interesting for the study. The employee information is gathered via Youforce, which is a human recourse information system. According to the Dutch law, it is forbidden to register the ethnicity of employees. Therefore, the ethnical background of employees is determined via birthplace.

This preliminary study showed that 5 departments of the Municipality of Nijmegen are in proportion divers on diversity category age and 9 departments on diversity category ethnicity (Annex 3). The preliminary research also showed that 29 departments of the Municipality of

Nijmegen are in proportion less divers on diversity category gender (Annex 3). Based on the results of the preliminary study, the research design (qualitative) and limited time for research (4.5 months), 3 middle managers are asked for the diversity category age, 4 middle managers for the diversity category ethnicity and 23 middle managers for the diversity category gender. These 30 middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen are asked via the mail to take part in the study (Annex 1a). The aforementioned case selection criteria are mentioned in the mail to the middle managers (Annex 1a). 11 middle managers reacted on this mail and thus selected themselves for this study.

*NS*

In case of NS, the Program Manager Diversity and Inclusion is contacted via the mail to find out which middle managers are appropriate for the study (Annex 1b). The aforementioned case selection criteria are mentioned in the mail to the Program Manager (Annex 1b). This contact resulted into 5 middle managers. The middle managers of NS are asked via the email to take part in the study (Annex 1b). Only the case selection criterion middle managers is mentioned in the mail to the middle managers (Annex 1b). 4 middle managers reacted on this mail and thus selected themselves for this study. 1 of these 4 middle managers is a region manager who supervises the middle managers.

In total 15 middle managers selected themselves for this study.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The concepts of the conceptual model (Figure 1) are used to analyse the interview data via Excel. These concepts are context department, normative context of diversity management, the way diversity management is done and diversity policy implementation challenges (Annex 4). The latter is divided in two sub concepts: challenges and dealing with challenges (Annex 4). These two sub concepts give insight about which diversity policy implementation challenges middle managers describe and how they think they should deal with this challenges. The (sub) concepts are added in the columns of the table (Annex 4). In the row of the table, the perceptions and experiences of middle managers about the (sub) concepts are summarized (Annex 4). The middle managers' perceptions and experiences within a (sub) concept are mentioned in order of numbers (Annex 4). In this way, it is easy to structure the different perceptions and experiences of a middle manager. The way of analysing is based on the principles of Miles and

Huberman (1994). They use tables to summarize research data if the study consists of a conceptual model (Baarda, Bakker, Fischer, Julsing, Peters, Van der Velden and De Goede, 2013, p. 211).

### **3.8 Limitations**

The methodological approach of this study has some research limitations.

The first research limitations is that only the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle manager is studied for the diversity categories age, gender and ethnicity, while diversity is about the differences of persons based on the categories race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, class status, education and religious/ spiritual orientation (American Psychological Association, 2002). This exclusion makes that the theoretical contribution of this study is less sufficient, because the study of Witkamp et al. (2016) argues that diversity issues in every diversity category vary to some extent from each other. Knowing this fact, it is possible that some diversity policy implementation challenges are excluded from this study. These challenges are caused by other diversity categories and intersectionality of different diversity categories.

The second limitation is that the second part of the research question encourage social desirable responses. In the second part of the research question middle managers argue how diversity policy implementation challenges should be dealt. It is possible that a middle manager names diversity actions to satisfy the researcher or other middle managers, while this middle manager prefers other actions to deal with the diversity policy implementation challenges. This social desirable behaviour has implications for the research credibility, because middle managers name diversity actions that are not effective and do not mention actions that have significant impact on the diversity policy implementation challenges, which makes the theoretical and practical contribution of this study less sufficient.

The third limitation is the case selection in the Municipality of Nijmegen. Only middle managers from departments that are divers on diversity category age and ethnicity and middle managers from departments that are less divers on diversity category gender are selected. Besides, within these departments not the middle managers of all the departments are invited for this study. This way of case selection excludes some middle managers while they can have significant contribution in this study. The way of case selection has consequences for the theoretical contribution of this study, because by excluding some middle managers specific

diversity policy implementation challenges and diversity actions are not taken into consideration in this study.

### **3.9 Research quality**

The quality of this study is ensured via the eight research qualities of Tracy (2010) to limit the consequences of aforementioned research limitations. Tracy (2010) distinguishes eight quality criteria for qualitative studies: worthy topic and scientific contribution, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics and meaningful coherence (p. 840).

Worthy topic and scientific contribution means that the topic of the study is relevant, timely and significant, and result into new insights (Tracy, 2010, p. 840-841). In other words, these two criteria refers to the relevance of the study: “Worthy studies are interesting and point out surprises—issues that shake readers from their common-sense assumptions and practices.” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840-841). The topic of this study is relevant because the research of Adserias et al. (2016) and Van Beek and Henderikse (2015) argues that more research is need about the role of middle managers in leading the implementation of the diversity policies because of different political, social, economic, legal and historical contexts of countries (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 7-8). This research sketch the middle managers’ diversity policy implementation challenges in a new context. With regard to the practical contribution of this study, the new insights provide implications that may help the organizations to develop principles about how to manage diversity. The research topic is timely because middle managers still face diversity policy implementation challenges (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 205-207; Kirton et al., 2016; Van Beek and Henderikse, 2015, p. 20).

Rich rigor is that the study uses rich descriptions and variety of theoretical and methodological constructs, uses the right context or sample for the study and mention the context of the study (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). All the theoretical constructs in this study are defined after they are introduced for the first time. All the important constructs of the research question are defined broadly in the theoretical framework. The data collection, analysis processes, description of the cases and organizations and the way cases are selected is given in the methodology. Besides, case selection criteria is used to select the right cases to serve the goal of this study. The right case is selected after a small preliminary study where is investigate if the case has a diverse workforce and implements diversity actions.

Sincerity is about the self-reflexivity values, biases of the researchers and transparency of the methods, and challenges (Tracy, 2010, p. 841-842). To achieve sincerity, a complete

description is given about the research methodology. In addition, support materials are attached in the appendix. The limitations of this study is mentioned in chapter methodology. To minimize researchers' biases, the researchers' activities are discussed with four colleagues and with the Municipality of Nijmegen.

Credibility is that the research is marked by in-depth description, concrete detail, describing of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, triangulation, multivocality (representation of a range of participant voices) and member reflections (Tracy, 2010, p. 842-844). In this study, important conclusions of middle managers are complemented with quotations to describe the scene. These quotations are then reflected on the insights from theoretical framework and researchers experiences and perceptions. Besides, the interviews are transcribed literally, which means that the nods, silences and humor are included in the interview transcription. Further, the researcher has been five months in the research organization to notice cultural values and thus tacit knowledge. Besides, triangulation of data is achieved via using different studies to describe the important research constructs. Multivocality is achieved through interviewing middle managers that manage different departments with different diversity issues and have different characteristics based on age and gender.

Resonance means that the researcher provides enough detail about the (emotional condition of) middle managers (Tracy, 2010, p. 844-845). The emotional condition of the middle managers is provided with quotations of the middle managers. Besides, the study provides a detailed description of the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS by mentioning exactly how diverse the workforce of the both organizations are, which diversity actions they have implemented and the opinions of different stakeholders in both organizations about diversity.

Ethics is about the interaction between the researcher and the middle manager (Tracy, 2010, p. 846-848; Symon and Cassell, 2012, p. 96). Research ethics are ensured via asking permission from the middle managers for research participation (Annex 1a and 1b). This permission consists of background information of the researcher and research topic, the purpose of the study, result of the preliminary study, research methods, expected duration of the interviews and outline of the wanted case (Annex 1a and 1b). This given information might have influenced middle managers' decision to participate.

Meaningful coherence means that the study achieves the goal of the study by using the research methods and procedures that fits the goal of the research and interconnects literature, research question and findings with each other (Tracy, 2010, p. 848). To achieve meaningful coherence, the goal of the research is translated into a research question. Literature is gathered based on this research question. This literature is then used to make interview questions. These

questions ensured that relevant insights is gathered to accomplish the goal of this study. The findings of the study are discussed in the light of the theory in the discussion.

## Chapter 4: Results

Analysis of data revealed that the middle managers interviewed were able to name several diversity policy implementation challenges and how they should deal with these challenges. Therefore, the qualitative data give an answer on the following research question:

*Which challenges do middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how do middle managers think they should deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity?*

### 4.1 Diversity policy implementation challenges

#### *Rules and procedures*

Middle managers argue that rules and procedures in the organization make it hard for them to achieve diversity. For instance, the rule that in case of a vacancy first employees inside the organization (that are searching for work) have the priority above others diminishes the possibilities to achieve diversity when the organization is less diverse:

“It obstructs often, you know, if you already have about diversity of your workforce, precisely to steer on it, that is very, because we have of course a procedure with application, we have internal rules with regard to: who have the priority? How must we do that? Which supplier do we have to use? And is everything arranged and before you have the right candidate, you have filled 86 forms, you know, but actually you want just to be busy with 1 thing and that is: you know, I want that man or women, I want to attract that young people or I will et cetera, et cetera. Thus that is obstructing. (*Dutch translation: Het belemmert gewoon vaak om gerichter, zeg maar, als je het dan al hebt over diversiteit van je personeelsbestand, om daar echt op te kunnen sturen, dat is best lastig, want we hebben hier natuurlijk een procedure met de sollicitatie, we hebben interne regels met betrekking tot: wie heeft er voorrang? Hoe moet dat? Welke leveranciers moet je gebruiken? En alles is geregeld en voordat je al iemand binnen hebt, heb je 86 formulieren ingevuld, weet je, maar eigenlijk wil je maar gewoon met 1 ding bezig zijn en dat is: weet je, ik wil dat mannetje of dat vrouwtje, ik wil die jongere binnenhalen of ik wil, etc., etc. Dus dat is belemmerend.*)”

This rule forces middle managers to hire these employees because of their legal status in the organization, which means that they cannot hire new employees outside the organization that make their team more diverse. This rule makes alongside other rules that middle managers should take extra effort if they want to hire a new (diverse) employee outside the organization,



while these middle managers prefer less extra effort as possible. To avoid the administrative load, middle managers do not hire new (diverse) employees outside the organization.

Besides, rules and procedures with regard to managerial involvement diminishes the ambition for diverse workforce according to the middle managers. The recruitment of employees has been done by the recruitment department and not by the middle manager. The middle manager only takes part in the selection round. In this way, it is harder for a middle manager to have impact on achieving a diverse team. Besides, also new middle managers are not allowed to recruit and select employees until they finished their management training. In this way, these managers have less involvement in achieving diversity. In addition, middle managers are less involved in the construction of diversity policies and diversity actions when a diversity department or practitioner acts from a hierarchical distance:

“No. No. And that is...It is a staff department and annoying of staff department is, I think, they advice and advice the line and that is it. And that is a little bit NS is build. All ivory tower and you do not leave the ivory tower that fast. There is written a lot and done, but it does not conveyed to the line. For me, there is less research about what the line needs.” (*Dutch translation*: “Nee. Nee. En dat is... Het is een stafafdeling en het vervelende van een stafafdeling is, vind ik, die adviseren en adviseren de lijn en dat is het. En dat is een beetje hoe de NS nog gebouwd is. Allemaal ivoren torentjes en je komt niet zo snel je ivoren torentje uit. Er wordt van alles geschreven en gedaan, maar het wordt niet echt heel erg uitgedragen naar de lijn. En wat mij betreft ook onvoldoende onderzocht dan wat de lijn nodig heeft.”)

The hierarchical distance of the diversity department makes that several middle managers do not know what the organization means with diversity and do not know that their employer had a diversity department, because they did not come previously in contact with this department. Kirton and Greene (2016) argue that confusion about diversity is one of the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers (p. 205), because then middle managers do not know which exact actions they should take to achieve diversity. The same middle managers do also not know that their employer has diversity goals that are intended for all the managers in the organization. Only one middle manager was familiar with the diversity department and the diversity goals, because in the past he was involved in developing a network for LGBT. The above quote also illustrates that the diversity department does not know what the middle managers need and which challenges they face in the implementation of diversity policies in order to make effective diversity policies and take effective diversity actions. Lack of managerial involvement makes middle managers less committed to diversity policies and diversity actions, because the intended policy could not fit the actual diversity practices and the middle managers could be unsatisfied because of less or no voice. Despite the limited

managerial involvement because of rules, middle managers did not take any actions by themselves to achieve more diversity. For instance, one middle manager admits that he did not organise a conversation with the recruitment department to talk about what kind of employees he needs in the future to achieve a diverse team. The lack of priority for diversity is because middle managers give more priority to operational targets that cause benefits on the short-term, while the benefits of diversity become apparent in the long-term (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 207).

### *Less priority*

Managers' priority plays an important role in the implementation of diversity policies. Middle managers face challenges in the implementation of diversity policies, because they give less priority to diversity targets. The priority goes to operational targets. Middle managers give several reasons for the lack of willingness.

First, diversity targets are less important according to some middle managers if the diversity targets are met. Several middle managers state that there is little reason for diversity policy or making diversity an item on the agenda, because they have already a diverse team or because enough diverse candidates apply for the vacancies:

“I have actually many good experiences with hiring people from different age categories, with people with a different ethical background...And I worked also many years in Amsterdam as an employee, thus you also saw all the prejudices, but also the benefits, thus you are not scared anymore for that. Thus, I think I could say for myself that I recruit relatively easy diverse and do not have an ideal picture of: ‘Someone should be blonde, blue eyes and not older than 21 for example.’ That is not entirely the case. No.” (*Dutch translation*: “Ik heb eigenlijk gewoon heel veel positieve ervaringen gehad met mensen uit verschillende leeftijdsgroepen aannemen, met mensen met een verschillende etnische achtergrond...En ik heb heel veel jaren ook in Amsterdam gewerkt als medewerker, dus dan heb je ook alle verschillende... Je hebt alle vooroordelen gezien, maar je hebt ook alle voordelen gezien, dus je schrikt daar niet meer zo van terug. Dus ik denk dat ik van mezelf kan zeggen dat ik redelijk makkelijk divers aanneem en niet een ideaal plaatje heb van: ‘Iemand moet blond, blauwe ogen en niet ouder dan 21 zijn bijvoorbeeld.’ Dat zit er niet echt helemaal in. Nee.”)

The fact that middle managers give less priority to diversity targets when the targets are met means that middle managers are only focusing on achieving diversity and not maintaining diversity, while they should because organizations' culture and functioning process and conflicts because of different values and norms of employees could result that diverse employees leave the organization.

Second, in order to perform well, middle managers hire employees that best fit the job requirements in case of a vacancy rather than hiring a diversity candidate:

“Well, you are looking for quality. In principle, I am not looking for a man or woman. I am looking for quality. You want the position to be filled in a right way. And if then there is women that are suitable, then you look to that first.” (*Dutch translation*: “Nou, je bent op zoek naar kwaliteit. In principe ben ik niet op zoek naar een man of een vrouw. Ik ben op zoek naar kwaliteit. Je wil dat die functie op een goede manier wordt ingevuld. En als er dan vrouwen zijn die geschikt zijn, dan kijk je daar eerst naar.”)

These job requirements are partly based on previous experiences and perceptions of middle managers about the right candidate for the job. In case of internships, the subject of thesis is an important indicator to hire a candidate alongside the competencies of a candidate. The focus on job requirements and/or subject of thesis could make that middle managers do not look or do not chose in first place the candidate that make their team composition divers and has the ability to become the perfect employee with training or learning on the job.

Third, one middle manager argues that it is difficult for him to combine the operational targets with diversity targets because of fewer resources. He has some employees with psychological problems. These employees require according to him more time for supervision. The fact that operational targets are more important for him makes that he has less time for supervision of employees. He uses the same reason to not hire trainees. Therefore, he argues that the organization should provide resources to support him in the supervision. However, the degree of supervision and the intensity of supervision depends on the work activities of an employee (Adelmeijer, Schenderling, Kok, Sikkema and Vloet, 2014, p. 33-35). This means that not every diverse employee needs a high degree of supervision. Besides, diverse employees need less supervision and middle managers are better able to supervise diverse employees, when the diverse employee does the same work activities for longer time (Adelmeijer et al., 2014, p. 102). Thus, the above middle manager has some prejudices based on previous experiences, which are not true if we believe Adelmeijer et al. (2014).

Fourth, also a middle manager's position in the management is an important reason for less priority for diversity targets. For instance, new middle managers have to learn how the organization works. This socialization and internalization of organizations' norms and values has more priority than achieving a diverse team:

“Because I was too busy with my base activities, to learn that, what is expected from me. The first year you are very busy with learning people, thus sitting extra in the train, your trainings, you have material education and that kind of stuff. Thus, that is what it takes to get the job done. Than, you miss this story that is actually very important, you miss it.” (*Dutch translation*:

“Omdat ik nog te druk was met echt mijn basiswerkzaamheden, om die onder de knie krijgen, wat er van me wordt verwacht. Het eerste jaar ben je heel druk met je mensen leren kennen, dus extra op de trein zitten, je opleidinkjes, je hebt natuurlijk wel materieelopleiding en dat soort dingen. Dus dat komt er allemaal even bij kijken. Dan mis je deze diepe slag, die eigenlijk wel heel belangrijk is, je mist hem wel.”)

This quote illustrates that middle managers need to learn their new basic management tasks before they focus on diversity targets, because they think that these basic management tasks are decisive for proper organizational performance.

The priority for operational targets makes that middle managers fall back on the old trusted habit and do not think deeper about how to achieve diversity, because they choose for kind of employees that they are familiar with and that worked very good in the past. A good example to illustrate this is a situation during the interview with a middle manager. She told during the interview that she sometimes needs immediately an employee for two or three months for an important job and then is diversity less important. In this kind of circumstances, she hires someone from the employment agency. Then I asked her, why she did not mention her affiliation for diversity to the employment agency on beforehand and she answered as follows:

“Well, that insight I get as a result of this conversation. That I think: ‘There we could have a conversation about.’ Such as: How is this possible? And how do you recruit? And do you look to the future what we hire, then you should also have other flavours in your stable.” (*Dutch translation*: “Nou, dat inzicht krijg ik dus nu door dit gesprek hier. Dat ik denk: daar zouden we ook eens over in gesprek kunnen gaan. Zo van: hoe kan dat? En hoe selecteren jullie? En kijken naar de toekomst wat wij willen inhuren, dan zul je ook wat andere smaken in je stal moeten hebben.”)

The aforementioned quote shows that middle managers are less aware of the value of diversity, because operational targets are more important, even if these middle managers find diversity important. When operational targets are critical at a certain point of time, middle managers set diversity aside. The lack of awareness because of operational targets can also be illustrated with the way a middle manager hired trainees for a trainee program:

“The first time actually not thought about it; seven trainees, high education/scientific research level, are used to recruit. A lot came, like 350 applicants, the best candidates were selected. Well, what did we had then? Eight very Dutch names, seven of them women and one men and all of them scientific research level. Then we said in advance: ‘We want the half high education and the half scientific research level.’ Thus that are two groups. ‘We want also almost as men as women and preferably also people with a non-western background.’ ... What do we have now actually? A very beautiful diverse group, half men, half women, half high education and half scientific research level and I believe, eventually we have hired ten, two or three with a

non-western background. And did we have done so much effort for it? No. Just awareness.” (*Dutch translation*: “De eerste keer eigenlijk helemaal niet bij nagedacht; zeven trainees, hbo-/wo-niveau, is gewoon op geworven. Er kwam heel veel, iets van 350 sollicitanten, daar zijn de besten uitgekozen. Nou, wat hadden we toen? Acht zeer Nederlandse mensen, van wie zeven vrouwen en één man en allemaal wo. Of misschien één hbo’er. Allemaal wo. Toen hebben we gezegd: ‘Dit is wel een beetje heel erg eenzijdig, laten we de tweede keer daar wat meer op letten.’ Toen hadden ze bij voorbaat al gezegd: ‘We willen de helft hbo en de helft wo.’ Dus dat zijn twee groepen gebleven. ‘We willen ook net zoveel mannen als vrouwen en het liefst ook nog mensen met een niet-Westerse achtergrond.’...Wat hebben we nu uiteindelijk? Een heel mooi divers groepje, half man, half vrouw, half hbo, half wo en ik geloof, uiteindelijk hebben we er zelfs tien mogen aanstellen, twee of drie met een niet-Westerse achtergrond. En hebben we daar nou echt heel veel moeite voor gedaan? Niet. Alleen maar het bewustzijn.”)

Thus, awareness for diversity is missing, but the reason for less diverse trainees lies also on the selection process. The selection process of the trainee program has been adjusted to hire trainees that are more diverse. In the first trainee program more than two small groups of selection committees is made and every group of selection committee had to select the best candidates. In the second trainee program the selection committee decided before the selection to hire trainees with different age, gender, ethnicity and ability. This decision made that the selection committee is divided in only two groups. The changing selection process illustrates that achieving diversity requires change in the functioning process of the organization.

The fact that middle managers do not think deeper about diversity because of priority for operational targets can be illustrated with a situation during the interview with a middle manager. This middle manager argued that the combination of low mobility in his department and the fact that his department has no projects that is appropriate for internship make it hard for him to hire young employees for his department. But during the interview he emphasized that the interview made him more aware about how to attract young employees:

“But a trainee could follow a procurement project, you know, that could work.” (*Dutch translation*: “Maar een trainee zou wel mee kunnen lopen in een aanbestedingsproject, weet je wel, dat is een afgerond traject, dat zou wel kunnen.”)

The above quote shows how important awareness is for achieving diversity, because during the interview he became aware of how he could attract young persons through traineeships. Therefore, the middle manager needed my expertise. Kirton et al. (2016) argue that middle managers are less aware of the value of diversity, because they have fewer experiences with diversity in working environment (p. 333). This brings me to the conclusion that middle managers miss the ability to think creative when it comes to diversity and need support from

diversity practioner, HR professional or other experts to find new ways of doing and thinking to achieve diversity.

With regard to less priority it is good to mention that middle managers do not have diversity targets or have diversity targets but are not accountable for these diversity targets. Because of this lack of diversity targets and accountability middle managers are not stimulated to take actions to achieve more diversity.

### *Supply side*

Middle managers argue that they face challenges to achieve diverse workforce due to factors on the supply side. Middle managers name three factors on supply side.

Less diverse candidates in the labour market is the first factor on the supply side that makes diversity policy implementation hard for middle managers. A middle manager experienced twice that a woman candidate applied for a technical job, which is mostly done by men, but then backed off later, because she was hired for another job. In general, he experienced that women mostly apply for administrative positions in his department and men for technical positions in his department. Despite this fact, he is still trying to make his team diverse:

“If they (women) fit the requirements. This is the case for everyone, but women then stand out, let me say it in this way. And if they do not match, but development is possible, than you look better to it. Than you give them more chance.” (*Dutch translation: “Of ze voldoen aan de vereisten. Dat kijk je bij iedereen, maar vrouwen vallen dan wat meer op, laat ik het zo zeggen. En als ze niet helemaal voldoen, maar er zijn wel ontwikkelingen mogelijk, dan kijk je daar wat beter naar. Dan geef je ze wat meer kansen.”*)

This middle manager shows that he is willing to change his expectations about the perfect candidate to hire more women employee for his department. Despite of changing his way of doing and thinking, less women apply for his department. This trend is also confirmed by another middle manager that finds it harder to recruit women candidates for management positions, because these candidates want to work part-time because of family responsibilities. The question in this case is to what extend diversity is integrated in the culture, structure and functioning process of the organization. It seems that diversity is not entirely integrated, because if women work part-time because of family responsibilities, then the organization should change the middle managers' job requirements. The current job requirements of middle manager effects the mindset of the middle manager, because it forces him to think and act according to the job requirements and thus hire middle managers that want to work full-time, while he knows that this could be impossible because women has family responsibilities. With regard to ethnicity, middle managers encounter challenges with attracting persons with non-

western background, particularly men with non-western background. A middle manager believes that this is something to do with their education level, because less men with non-western background are graduated for scientific research level. In her opinion, a second reason for this trend is the education system of the Netherlands:

“And I say it longer that our education system that is very suitable for women and that is less suitable for men. A. It starts with the kindergarten teachers, they are all women that are teaching. There it starts. That is for real. Young boys, they should play and romp around and they get there much less space, thus they drop out much faster. I see that in my group of friends I see that boys fail very often, earlier, or they have much more difficulties with finishing the education system, because I think it is not a good fit. Thus that is happening. Thus you have studies which 90% is a women. Thus, that I see back here at the table. And I think that this boys chose much more for IT other types professions...The whole study is aimed for that women (laughing). They surface. They can present very good, they studied very good.” (*Dutch translation*: “En ik zeg al langer dat ons schoolsysteem, dat is heel geschikt voor vrouwen en dat is minder geschikt voor mannen. A. begint het met kleuterleidsters, het zijn allemaal vrouwen die voor de klas staan. Daar begint het al mee. Dat is gewoon echt. Jongetjes, die moeten spelen en ravotten en die krijgen daar veel minder ruimte voor, dus die haken gewoon veel eerder af. Ik zie dat ook gewoon in mijn kennissenkring zie ik heel vaak dat jongen uitvallen, eerder, of veel meer moeite hebben om het schoolsysteem vol te maken, omdat het denk ik niet een goede fit is. Dus dat zie je gebeuren. Dus je hebt opleidingen waar 90% gewoon vrouw is. Dat zie ik dus terug hier aan tafel. En ik denk dat die jongens veel meer in de IT schuiven in de andere type beroepen....De hele schoolopleiding is gericht geweest op die vrouw. (lacht) Die komen bovendien. Die kunnen goed presenteren, die hebben dat ontzettend goed geleerd.”)

According to this middle manager, the Dutch labour market has more women candidates because the education system of the Netherlands exists of elements that are only suitable for women and thus give women more chance to succeed. This middle manager thinks that this is because the education system is designed by women. However, she mention also that 10% of students are men and that men mostly attend IT studies or other studies, where they also have to present and study well to pass for their studies. Thus, the opinion of the middle manager is based on studies that are mostly studied by the women.

The region where the company is located is the second factor on the supply side that makes diversity policy implementation hard for middle managers. Several managers argues that the population of Nijmegen is less diverse in comparison with cities in the west of the Netherlands, which makes harder to recruit persons with non-western background. However, one middle manager states that this was a problem in the past, but now more persons with non-western background applies for the vacancies of her department. Besides, this middle manager

hired a young employee with non-western background in collaboration with a youth network. The reason for hiring more people with non-western background is the pressure from the environment according to this middle manager:

“I think that it worked, then in diverse media channels there was a lot attention for people that with another background applied and they were denied at the moment that they put Mustafa as their name and when they say Hans, that we were invited. Sick, but that attention as resulted to the fact that governmental organisations look sharper to: ‘We must hire more culture and invite for a conversation.’” (*Dutch translation*: “Ik denk dat wat wel mee heeft gewerkt, er is toen in de diverse media behoorlijk wat aandacht geweest voor mensen die met een andere achtergrond solliciteerden en niet binnenkwamen op het moment dat ze hun voornaam Mustafa er neer zetten en op het moment dat ze Hans van wijze van spreken zeiden, dat ze wel werden uitgenodigd. Bezopen, maar die aandacht heeft er denk ik wel toe geleid dat met name de overheidsinstellingen wel scherper zijn geworden op: wij moeten gewoon meer culturen binnenhalen en uitnodigen voor een gesprek.”)

The above quote indicates that the environmental pressure make that organizations put more effort into diversity. Besides, the above quote means that organization should put extra effort to hire persons with non-western background by integrating diversity in the culture, structure and functioning processes of the organization, because the current functioning processes of the organization does not make the middle managers aware to hire persons with non-western background.

The economic condition of an organization is the third factor on the supply side that makes diversity policy implementation hard for middle managers. In case of economic growth, organizations are willing to invest more on diversity. However, in case of economic crisis there is less attention for diversity:

“We are like 10 years ago very active in it (diversity), then anonymous application and workshops for managers played a role. Then it had very much attention. Thereafter it is a little bit disappeared. I think in retrospect it had something to do with economic crisis. We had actually less possibilities to hire people and then you are less busy with diversity, thus then we had much less attention for it.” (*Dutch translation*: “Wij zijn zo’n jaar of 10 geleden daar heel actief in geweest, toen speelde ook dat anoniem solliciteren en workshops voor leidinggevenden. Toen heeft dat echt heel veel aandacht gehad. Daarna is het een beetje weggeëbd. Ik denk achteraf gezien dat dat ook wel met de economische crisis te maken heeft gehad. We hadden gewoon eigenlijk heel weinig vacatures, dus ook heel weinig mogelijkheden om mensen aan te nemen en dan ben je toch iets minder bezig met diversiteit, dus toen heeft het echt veel minder aandacht gehad.”)

The low attention for diversity has to do with less vacancies. The organization want to achieve diversity, but less vacancies because of economic crisis and low employee turnover make that



organizations can not hire new diverse employees, which has the consequence that the organization give less priority to diversity.

#### *Demand side*

Middle managers indicate diversity policy implementation challenges because of factors on the demand side. Low mobility and low employee turnover in organization and/or departments in combination with fewer vacancies cause less diverse workforce. This challenge is especially the case in the organization or departments that are less diverse. This low mobility is caused by job security. Persons do not search for a new job, because they are afraid to loss their job if they have already a permanent contract. This low mobility results into less vacancy and thus less options to hire diverse persons from outside. In addition, if there is a vacancy, than certain HR policies diminish the possibility to hire diverse persons outside the organization, such as the priority rule for employees inside the organization:

“...that we actually because of *herschikkingskandidaten* (people inside the organization that has a permanent contract, but do not work or work less than agreed) are ‘forced’ to hire people (*herschikkingskandidaten*). And ‘forced’, because it is of course about legal status of people: if someone can be made fit, than he or she has the right to be appointed for the vacancy, but that means that you are less flexible in terms of flexibility and employability of your people. (*Dutch translation: “...dat we gewoon vanuit de *herschikkingskandidaten*, *statushouders* soms ook werden ‘gedwongen’ om mensen te plaatsen. En ‘gedwongen’, want het gaat natuurlijk om de rechtspositie van mensen: als iemand geschikt te maken valt, dan heeft-ie het recht om geplaatst te worden, maar dat betekent wel dat je daardoor minder flexibel was qua flexibiliteit en inzet van je mensen.”)*)

The demand side factors and the above quote show that intersectionality of problems cause less diversity in an organization that has already less diverse workforce. In case of low mobility and low employee turnover in combination with the preference rule for employees, the organization will achieve much harder a diverse workforce if the organization has less vacancies, because low mobility and low employee turnover result into less vacancies. And if there is enough permanent employees that fall under the preference rule, then they will probably fill the vacancies. When the organization has enough vacancies because of high employee turnover and/or high mobility, it is able to hire more diverse persons, because not all the vacancies will then be filled by permanent employees that fall under the preference rule.

### *Managers' skills*

Diversity policy implementation depends partly on the skills of the middle managers. Middle managers encounter challenges with diversity management because of fewer knowledge. Having less knowledge about the values and norms of persons with non-western background could result into conflicts and misunderstandings between the manager and employee:

“I had recently, than you fall in that trap again, a Moroccan social worker. And I asked her to do something and she answered: ‘Yes.’ And then she did not do it or she dodged. En actually I found out, because it was annoying at any given moment, that she find it hard to say ‘no’ to authority.....she is a lot younger than me, thus she taught: ‘That is someone, she is older, and also my boss, thus I should not refuse it.’” (*Dutch translation: Ik had onlangs nog, dan trap je er weer in, een Marokkaanse maatschappelijk werker. En die vroeg ik dan iets en dan zei ze: “Ja.” En vervolgens deed ze het niet. Of ze draaide eromheen. En uiteindelijk kwam ik er dus achter, want op een gegeven moment wordt dat natuurlijk heel irritant, dat zij het gewoon heel erg lastig vindt om ‘nee’ te zeggen tegen autoriteit...ze is een stuk jonger dan ik, dus ze dacht: dat is iemand, die is ouder, en ook nog mijn leidinggevende, dus daar mag ik niet weigeren.”*)

However, according to another middle manager this has nothing to do with the non-western background, but with the fact that every employee has his own way of doing and has good reasons therefore. With regard to fewer knowledge, some middle managers also indicate their lack of knowledge about how to recruit disabled employees and women for technical functions, and how to define the right candidate beforehand to attract diverse employees. In addition, fewer knowledge about how to manage social aspects between the employees is for middle managers a mediator of diversity policy implementation challenges. Differences in norms and values and certain prejudices result into conflicts between middle manager and employees and between employees, which make diversity management harder. A middle manager tell his story about a Russian employee that had several conflicts with his own colleagues because of cultural differences. Despite the several attempts from the middle manager, this Russian employee still had conflicts and the plan was to transfer him to another location because of these conflicts, but he left the organization after a while because he did not succeed for the internal education:

“I think that the group learned a lot of this situation. Later people have said: ‘What there is happened should not be happen anymore.’ That is what we have achieved in any case, that many people have saw: ‘What there is happened, in that way, that was not fair and that was not allowed. He had never got a fair chance. That we must not act like that anymore.’” (*Dutch translation: Ik denk wel dat de groep er heel veel van geleerd heeft. Later hebben mensen ook wel gezegd: “Wat daar gebeurd is, dat mag nooit meer gebeuren.” Dat hebben we in elk geval wel bereikt, dat een hoop mensen wel zijn in gaan zien van: “Wat daar gebeurd is, op die manier, dat was niet eerlijk en dat mocht niet. Hij heeft nooit een eerlijke kans gekregen. Dat moeten we niet meer zo doen.”*)

Prejudices could also have impact on the middle managers' behaviour. Middle managers could get prejudices based on previous bad experiences. Middle managers will therefore not hire a certain diversity group to avoid these bad experiences in the future.

To summarize, middle managers argue that they face five challenges in the implementation of diversity policies:

- Middle managers face challenges in the implementation of diversity policies because of rules and procedures. These rules and procedures make that middle managers should take extra effort to achieve diversity and rules and procedures diminish the involvement of middle managers in achieving and maintaining diversity.
- Middle managers faces challenges because of less priority for diversity targets. Fewer experiences with diversity in working environment, the priority for operational targets because of sufficient diversity targets, focusing too much on hiring the candidate with the best abilities, difficulties with combining work and diversity responsibilities at the same time and middle managers' priority for socialization and internalization of organizations' norms and values make that middle managers are less aware of diversity targets.
- Middle managers face challenges due to factors on the supply side. These factors are less diverse candidates in the labour market, less diverse population in the region where the company is located and the economic instability of the organization.
- Middle managers face challenges because of factors on the demand side. Low mobility and low employee turnover in the organization in combination with fewer vacancies make it hard to achieve diverse workforce.
- Middle managers' inability and less knowledge about diversity management cause challenges in the implementation of diversity policies.

#### **4.2 How to deal with challenges**

Middle managers faces challenges in the implementation of diversity policies because of rules and procedures, lack of priority, factors on demand and supply side and lack of management skills. In the interviews these middle managers state how they think they should deal with this challenges. In this subparagraph these desired diversity actions of middle managers will be discussed.

### *Creating priority for diversity*

Several situations in this study showed that managerial and political pressure creates priority for diversity. Creating priority for diversity solves the diversity policy implementation challenge lack of priority, because managerial and political attention stimulate middle managers to do something with diversity. For instance, the selection process of trainee program changed after the top manager give instructions to recruit more diverse trainees. Besides, the municipality is now making a diversity policy after a request of the municipal council of Nijmegen for a diversity policy. To create priority through managerial pressure, middle managers argue that top managers should make statements about diversity via several internal communication channels. Besides, they should also provide resources that can be used to achieve diversity according to the middle managers. The top managers prove in this way the importance of diversity for the organization.

### *Maintain priority*

Several middle managers state that diversity has been promoted several times in the organization, but after a while it lost his importance and the organization did not invest time and money on diversity anymore. That is why these middle managers argue that maintaining priority for diversity is necessary. In this way the organization will solve the diversity policy implementation challenge lack of priority. According to the middle managers, organizations should take several actions to maintain priority for diversity among the middle managers.

First, the priority for diversity targets has something to do with the business imperative of diverse workforce, because several middle managers admit the priority for diversity because of its importance for the quality of service delivery. Diversity will help them to achieve better organizational performance through better customer communication:

“What I noticed and find hard, is that foreign customer does not understand something and Ismaël for instance speaks Arabic, thus I fetch him and that works very good. He is coming for a moment, he explains in his own language and the customers go with a big smile and it is fixed.” (*Dutch translation*: “Wat ik merk en moeilijk vind, is als buitenlanders iets niet begrijpen en Ismaël bijvoorbeeld spreekt natuurlijk lekker Arabisch, dus die haal ik er even bij en dat werkt echt hartstikke goed. Die komt er effe bij, die legt het even in de eigen taal uit en mensen gaan weer met een smile de deur uit en het is weer geregeld.”)

The above quote shows that the organization deals with customer that do not speak the Dutch language. In order to help them better, middle managers argue that the organization needs employees that speak foreign language and understand foreign culture, because the customers

appreciate this. Middle managers believe that diversity could also result into better organizational performance through having employees with different abilities, knowledge and behavior, because employees could then complement each other's weaknesses and learn from each other new things. However, only the social justice reasoning of diversity could also result into more diversity. One middle manager has a diverse team, because according to him everybody should be treated as equal and thus should have equal chance in the labour market. His reasons for diversity arise from the fact that according to him big organizations and governmental organizations should achieve diversity because they have enough sources in comparison with small organizations, and have the obligation to give the right example to the stakeholders. The business imperative of diversity is not important for the tasks of his department, because his department has minimum contact with customers. Knowing the aforementioned business case and social justice reasons for diversity, some middle managers find both business case and social justice reasoning equally important. Despite the importance of both reasons, some middle managers admit that the business imperative of diversity comes at the first place. Therefore, middle managers state that a tailor-made approach for diversity should be used to make the business benefits of diversity apparent for them, because every department has other team composition and thus every department has other diversity issues:

“In Eindhoven at G&S I had less women in my team, thus I would like to have women in the team, because it was a safety organization. You do want to have all that macho behaviour and maybe it is good to have some women...And then we had quite a lot women, I believe we had hired 6 or 7 women in the team. That is a lot in 1 round.” (*Dutch translation: “In Eindhoven bij G&S had ik weinig dames in mijn team zitten, dus ik wilde graag vrouwen in het team, want dat was een veiligheidsorganisatie. Je wil niet dat dat allemaal machogedrag wordt en het is misschien ook wel goed om wat dames erin te hebben...En toen zijn er ook best wel veel dames, ik geloof dat we 6 of 7 dames hebben aangenomen binnen het team. Dat is best wel veel in 1 ronde.”*)

This quote illustrates that the usefulness and necessity of diversity becomes more apparent in a tailor-made approach. If the middle manager in the above quote did not pay attention to diversity on team level, he would not be conscious about the kind of employees he needs for his team. Thus, approximating diversity on small scale makes sure that middle managers maintain priority for diversity, because then they understand the benefits of diversity for their department. These benefits of diversity can be different for every department because of the employee composition, which means that focusing diversity goals and actions on a certain diversity category for the whole organization will not put every middle manager in action to achieve diversity. A tailor-made approach for diversity makes sure that every middle manager

in the organization should achieve diversity on his own way. The focus lies then on all diversity categories for the whole organization. A critical note can be added here: a tailor-made approach will only work if diversity is useful and necessary for the middle manager, because otherwise any attempt to achieve diversity will not get the attention of the middle manager.

Second, middle managers argue that their supervisor should make diversity a standard agenda item in the management consultations in order to maintain priority for diversity. The consultation should be about how diverse the organization or department is, which actions are been taken, which challenges middle managers face and what actions are needed to deal with this challenges. This consultation help the middle managers to remember about diversity and to take actions consistently. This means that supervisors' voice is important to get the middle managers in action for diversity, because middle managers will not take diversity actions if the supervisor does not want to invest in diversity.

Third, middle managers argue that maintaining priority for diversity should be done through public relation channels, ambassadors, conversations and diversity networks. In case of conversations, the HR department has an important role. Middle managers argue that HR professionals should pay attention to diversity by mentioning it in the conversations, because Jones (2006) argues that middle managers indicate diversity as a HR issue, not an operational issue (p. 23). Ambassadors and diversity networks have the function to communicate the importance of diversity and best practices. Establishing diversity networks for a certain diversity category integrates diversity in the organizational culture:

“That, think I if I look back that homosexuality at least more apparent in the NS. It is also become more normal.” (*Dutch translation*: “Dat, denk ik als ik nu terugkijk dat homoseksualiteit in ieder geval meer zichtbaar is binnen de NS. Het is ook meer normaal geworden.”)

Ambassadors have the goal to make diversity a part of the organizational culture by asking continually attention for diversity. This attention is needed according to a middle manager, because diversity is a topic that will lose its importance after a while.

Fourth, several middle managers argue that accountability for diversity outcomes keep middle managers' priority for diversity. More specifically, diversity outcomes should be a part of the performance appraisal. The diversity of the workforce should be therefore outlined per department. Despite the fact that middle managers think that diversity outcomes should be a part of the performance appraisal, they argue that middle managers should not be punished if their outcomes are not sufficient due to acceptable reasons, because then middle managers will only hire persons based on a diversity category and not based on their quality.

Fifth, middle managers state that a diversity department or diversity practitioner is a way to maintain priority for diversity, because it makes them more aware of their own bias and it reminds them constantly about diversity:

“It triggers me more now I know that there is a program manager, that I maybe could once invite, look what the men could say. That you have reached in me.” (*Dutch translation*: “Het triggert mij meer nu ik weet dat er een programmamanager is, die ik misschien eens een keertje zou kunnen uitnodigen, kijken wat die man zou kunnen zeggen. Dus dat heb je wel bereikt bij me.”)

According to a middle manager, the diversity department or diversity practitioner should organize diversity meetings and spread information about diversity. One middle manager admits that having a diversity practitioner only works in combination with a diversity policy. The diversity policy should then ensure that diversity is integrated in the system of the organization. This middle manager confirms this statement with the fact that some employees with other non-western background was hired but left the organization very fast, because they did not feel themselves comfortable and did not meet the norms of the organization. The function of the diversity practitioner is to create awareness under the employees in the organization:

“Only having something on paper and say: ‘Tada, we have policy’, that will disappear in the drawer and nobody is anymore busy with it. Thus, you need someone that always bring it under the attention.” (*Dutch translation*: “Alleen iets op papier zetten en zeggen: ‘Tada, we hebben beleid’, dat verdwijnt in de la en daar is niemand meer mee bezig. Dus je hebt wel iemand nodig die dat steeds weer onder de aandacht brengt.”)

In the interviews with the middle managers it became obvious that some middle managers struggle with creating opportunities to achieve diversity. Some middle managers did not know how to create opportunities and some of them came up with opportunities during the interview. Knowing this, the diversity practitioner or diversity department could also support organization in finding opportunities for achieving diversity.

### *Diversity policy*

Only creating priority and awareness for diversity is not enough. Middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen argue that the organization needs a new diversity policy to achieve and maintain diversity, because the old diversity policy is not enough. They believe that this policy is needed to integrate diversity in the system core of the organization. It should make the organizational culture, functioning process and organization structure more diversity-friendly. Therefore, a diversity policy solves the diversity implementation challenges rules and procedures, lack of priority, supply side, demand side and managers’ skills, because the

organization takes in account diversity in all their rules, procedures and actions. Where should this new policy consist of? Middle managers mention five points that belong in the new diversity policy.

First, the diversity policy should appoint a vision for diversity. That means that the organization should mention in the policy what diversity means for the organization, what the purpose of achieving diversity is and how the organization want to achieve diversity. The middle managers are on this way more obvious about their expectations with regard to diversity targets and can take targeted actions to achieve diversity.

Second, the diversity policy should sustain diversity. It means that diversity management should be focused in the long term:

“You saw at some point: ‘With a lot of people we hired with another ethnical background, there was a cutback and then they were fired again.’ Thus, it is actually on many level, how you keep people in the organization sustainable? And that is on the one hand by not firing them if accidentally it is getting excited. Secondly, it is also that you should communicate intercultural but also have intercultural policy, and that you are ware of your own weakness as white organization and that you also change and must learn from other cultures that you have in house and if this willingness is not there, on all the levels, then it will never work...” (*Dutch translation*: “Je zag op een gegeven moment: ‘Met heel veel mensen gingen we aannemen met een andere etnische achtergrond, er kwam een bezuinigingsronde en dan vlogen zij er allemaal net zo hard weer uit.’ Dus het is eigenlijk op heel veel niveaus, hoe hou je mensen duurzaam binnen? En dat is enerzijds door ze niet te ontslaan als het per ongeluk weer spannend wordt. Ten tweede is het dat je ook intercultureel communiceert maar ook intercultureel beleid hebt, en dat je ook bewust moet zijn van je eigen zwakke punten als witte organisatie en dat je ook mee moet bewegen en moet leren van de andere culturen die je in huis hebt en als die bereidheid er niet is, op alle niveaus, dan gaat het nooit lukken...”)

This above quote illustrates that achieving diversity is not enough, because when the organizations culture and functioning process is not taken into account diversity, diverse employees will leave the organization after a while. Thus, it is possible that organizations have processes that do not achieve diversity, even if the organization promote diversity inside and outside the organization.

Third, the diversity policy should focus on the places where it is hard to achieve a diverse workforce, because in that way the organization is able to learn from diversity policy challenges:

“And you see actually very often that certain big projects, and logical, because you want to react the audience and you want to reach the media and that you reach easier in the North, in the Randstad (this name is used to mention the four Dutch cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht). Watch the news, watch the things that come by, if there is happen



something in Amsterdam, it is new and you see it and if it is in Urk (a municipality in the Netherlands), well we have there no station (laughing)” if it happens in the utmost, it is now big news. Despite indeed for this kind of things I would think: ‘There you should as company, you want to show diversity to the outside world of you want to do something with diversity as organization to learn something.’ If you want to learn, then you should start on the edge, because there are the challenges. De exciting cases.” (*Dutch translation*: “En je ziet het gewoon heel vaak dat bepaalde grote projecten, en logisch, want je wil het publiek bereiken en je wil de media bereiken en die bereik je nu eenmaal makkelijker in het noorden, in de Randstad. Kijk naar het nieuws, kijk naar dingen die voorbij komen, als er iets gebeurt in Amsterdam, is het nieuws en is het te zien en als er in Urk iets gebeurt, nou hebben we daar geen station (lacht) als ergens in het uiterste iets gebeurt, is het geen groot nieuws. Terwijl juist voor dit soort dingen zou ik denken: ‘Daar zou je wel als bedrijf zijnde, wil je divers zijn om aan de buitenwereld te laten zien wij zijn divers of wil je met diversiteit aan de slag om als bedrijf zijnde iets te leren.’ Als je iets wil leren, dan zou je aan de rand moeten beginnen, want daar liggen de uitdagingen. De spannende stukken.”)

The diversity policy implementation challenge is different in every region. Some regions have difficulties with hiring persons with non-western background or women managers, while some other regions have difficulties with managing diversity because of different values and norms of employees. The differences in challenges are also based on departments. Some departments have less vacancies because of low mobility and low employee turnover, while other departments have more vacancies. Besides, almost every department faces difficulties with one or more diversity categories. Some departments find it hard to attract women, while others have difficulties with hiring persons with non-western background. Knowing this, the organization should focus on all the regions to discover all the possible diversity policy implementation challenges.

Fourth, the diversity policy should give preferential right to a certain diversity group, because this attracts certain diversity groups. Several middle managers told that they hired persons from a certain diversity group for a position by explicitly mention the preference for this diversity group in the vacancy.

Fifth, the diversity efforts of the organization should be monitored. In this way, the organization could look if the diversity policy is effective and which changes should be made to achieve diversity more effective.

### *Stimulating mobility*

According to the middle managers, low mobility in the organization in combination with less vacancies makes diversity policy implementation harder. Middle managers argue that

organizations should create more mobility to hire external employees that are diverse and thus solve the diversity policy implementation challenge demand side. According to the middle managers, more mobility should be created via internships, work experience jobs, temporal contracts and redundancy packages. The first two options stimulate more diversity, because then there is less focus on job requirements and more focus on candidates that want to learn something. And in case of proper functioning, these trainees could be hired because they build already job experience, which is important for some middle managers in the organization. The redundancy packages give the organization chance to hire new employees from outside the organization:

“But especially for the age, municipality age of officials is very high, 48 comma somewhat. Thus, there is the challenge to get more young people and thus also young people with an immigrant background, and that is going to happen I think if we have again that action, ‘het generatiepact (redundancy package for employees older than 55 years)’, you heard from that, I think.” (*Dutch translation: “Maar vooral de leeftijd, gemeentelijke leeftijd van ambtenaren is heel hoog, 48 komma nog wat. Dus daar zit ook de uitdaging om veel meer jongere mensen naar binnen te halen en dus ook jongere mensen met een allochtone achtergrond, en dat gaat denk ik wel gebeuren als er weer zo’n actie komt, het generatiepact, dat heb je ook wel gehoord, denk ik.”*)

In addition, conversations with employees about their mobility help to achieve more mobility. One middle manager states that there should be flexible rules to achieve more mobility. For instance, this middle manager argues that the status of employees from employment agencies should be equal to internal employees to stimulate mobility and thus create diversity. Mobility could also be achieved by regrouping the team composition. In case the department consist of 20 to 30 employees, most of the employees have the same position and the department is divided in one or more sub teams, it is possible to get a more diverse team by regrouping the team.

#### *Using networks*

Networks play an important role in the implementation of diversity policies. It helps middle managers to recruit diverse persons and to develop skills for managing diversity. With this networks the middle manager could deal with diversity implementation challenges supply side and managers’ skills. Middle managers argue that there are three kinds of networks to work with:

First, institutions and organizations that know and help the minorities can be used to recruit more diverse employees. These institutions and organizations know how to reach the minorities according to a middle manager:

“Well, what I already said: we have at the youth network Tandem, there I went to call upon. I say: ‘We have an assignment. I have there never eaten cheese of it (It means: I don’t have knowledge about it). Thus, we ask your support. The assignment is indeed with a number of supervisors and make sure that je recruit other people and this can be people with criminal records, from different backgrounds, several....The university of the street. That is what you have to recruit.’ Thus I call upon them: ‘Do you want to take part in the selection committee? What do we have to take in account?’ What we had very fast, is that ...(name of a person) joined. Antillean that has many experience on this discipline. Thus, he could support us very much, thus in that way we started....in that way we were looking to suitable candidates. And that was a difficult one. Than we have exploit of the youth network here in Nijmegen, Tandem. They have for very long time experience with this kind of work. We are then selecting and there we found a lot of youth, that take step, where we talked just about, want to make, they were represent. Then we recruited and we had conversation.” (*Dutch translation*: “Nou, wat ik al zei: we hebben bij het jongerenwerk Tandem, daar ben ik gaan aankloppen. Ik zeg: ‘Wij krijgen een opdracht. Ik heb daar totaal geen kaas van gegeten. Dus we vragen jullie ondersteuning en begeleiding daarin. De opdracht is inderdaad met een aantal toezichthouders en zorgen dat je andere mensen binnenhaalt en dit mogen mensen zijn met een strafblad, met allerlei afkomsten, allerlei... De universiteit van de straat. Die moet je binnenhalen.’ Dus ik ben bij hen gaan aankloppen: ‘Willen jullie in die selectiecommissie komen zitten? Waar moeten we aan denken.’ Wat we al vrij snel hadden, was dat Marcel aansloot. Antiliaan die al heel veel ervaring heeft op dit vakgebied. Dus die kon ons heel erg erin ondersteunen, dus zo zijn wij gestart....zo zijn we gaan zoeken naar geschikte kandidaten. En dat was nog wel een hele lastige. Dan hebben wij gebruikgemaakt van het jongerenwerk hier in Nijmegen, Tandem. Die al veel langer ervaring hebben met dit soort werk. We zijn toen gaan selecteren en daar kwamen inderdaad heel veel jongeren, die die stap, waar we het net over hadden, wilden maken, die kwamen in beeld. Toen zijn we gaan selecteren en zijn we in gesprek gegaan.”)

This middle manager also asked the support of two consultancy firms, which are specialized in persons with non-western background, for team development. He still work together with these firms, because it helps the middle manager in managing his team. .

A second way of using the network is working together with a certain diversity category to achieve diversity. For instance, some middle managers used social media to attract young employees. Therefore, these middle managers collaborated with the target group to recruit young employees, because some middle managers did not know how to attract young employees.

A third way of recruiting diverse employees is the network of the employees in the organization. Several middle managers state that they use the network of their subordinates to hire diverse employees. However, according to one middle manager using the network of employees for new vacancies could be a problem to achieve diversity if the current team

composition is not diverse, because most of the times the employees choose their own kind. Therefore, organizations should draft rules about how to use the network of own employees effective to recruit diverse employees. Organizations could also appoint some ambassadors that represent a certain diversity category. The network of this ambassadors can be used to recruit persons from a certain diversity category.

### *Diversity training, experiences and employee conversations*

Middle managers state that managing diversity requires certain skills and knowledge from a middle manager.

First, middle managers should know and understand the norms and values of subordinates with non-western background, and the abilities of their subordinates. This understanding helps the middle manager to understand the behaviour of their subordinates and how to use their norms and values and abilities to reach the operational targets. One middle manager states that she appointed two subordinates for a certain task. These two persons have other abilities, so that they can supplement each other's weaknesses. In this way, the middle manager wants to teach her subordinates to respect their own weakness and to invest in their own strengths. In short, middle managers should have more knowledge about the different diversity categories, because some other middle managers also argued that having more knowledge about young persons and young persons with non-western background helped them to manage diversity.

Second, middle managers should be aware of their prejudices. Certain situations on work could lead to prejudices about a certain group of persons. The middle manager should manage his own prejudices, if someone from that group apply for a job.

Third, middle managers should prevent and manage conflicts. A middle manager tells his story about how several women left the organization because of a masculine culture and what he did to prevent this:

“I have it also once broach that I said: ‘There will join shortly three young ladies our group. You leave the ladies alone.’ Yes, sometimes you must have to speak like that. Because that is happening on the work place. Yes, that is what you don't need. You can have that there happen things whereby the ladies think: ‘What happened here?’” (*Dutch translation*: “Ik heb het ook weleens op tafel gegooid dat ik zeg: ‘Er komen nou dadelijk drie jonge meiden. Jullie blijven met je poten van die meiden af.’ Ja, soms moet je ook maar gewoon zo praten. Want dat gebeurt op de werkvloer. Ja, dat kun je niet hebben. Je kunt niet hebben dat daar dingen gebeuren waardoor die meiden zoiets hebben van: ‘Wat gebeurt hier?’”)

Take in account these aforementioned required skills and knowledge, middle managers argue that diversity training, experiences and employee conversations are ways to learn these skills and knowledge. This three instruments help the middle manager to deal with the diversity implementation challenge managers' skills. Each of this three instruments have his own influence on the skills and knowledge of middle managers.

Diversity training is according to some middle managers the best way to learn these skills and knowledge. Diversity training helped one middle manager to let his team perform better and thus manage diversity. This middle manager did a training with his own team, where every team member had to present his strengths and weaknesses. In this way the middle manager and his team did know which team members could work together for a certain tasks or assignment. Diversity training gives also the chance to hire diverse candidates easier, because according to a middle manager training gives grounds for middle managers to not look for the perfect candidate but to look for a candidate that is able to become the perfect candidate through training. Diversity training also helps middle managers to manage their prejudices, because they are more aware of their prejudices and are better able to deal with the prejudices. According to a middle manager, diversity training is only effective if it is in-depth:

“They could give their once a training about, but that should be in-depth. Because if you touch the surface, than...because you have also many training for a day or halve days. That is the surface, thus is should be nice if you of course have no interest or never been interested or you are not a person with feelings, that is already the difference here, than you could learn something for it. I would like to have more in-depth. Thus, that you know where people come from, how and why they think as they think. That could be for me a good investigation. Then you hear every time something new.” (*Dutch translation: “Ze kunnen daar wel een keer een training voor geven, maar dan moet-ie wel diepgaand zijn. Want als je de oppervlakte raakt, dan...want je hebt ook heel vaak trainingen van een dag of een halve dag. Dat is oppervlakte, dus is leuk als je er inderdaad geen interesse voor hebt of nooit geïnteresseerd hebt of niet een gevoelsmens bent, dat is ook al een verschil hier, dan kan je er wel wat aan hebben. Ik zou meer de diepte in willen dan. Dus dat je nog meer weet waar mensen vandaan komen, hoe en waarom ze denken zoals ze denken. Dat zou voor mij op zich nog wel een goede verdiepingsslag kunnen zijn. Dan hoor je iedere keer wat nieuws.”)*

The above quote illustrates that diversity training should be about how persons from a certain diversity category think and why they think like that, because then middle managers know how to act in certain circumstances. Besides, knowing this could prevent conflicts between the middle manager and employee according to a middle manager, because the middle manager then already understands why the employee acts in a certain way. Middle managers are also better able to manage their team with in-depth diversity training, because they are better able to

communicate to their team. For instance, one middle manager states that persons with non-western background find family very important. When a family member gets sick or die then they have the tradition to visit the family for certain days. Knowing this, he was better able to communicate this to the whole team. Thus, diversity training about how a certain diversity group thinks and acts delivers added value for the middle manager.

The required skills and knowledge for diversity management can also be learned through previous experiences according to some middle managers. Several middle manager argued that they are better able to manage diversity because they have gathered more knowledge through their experiences. One middle manager tells his best practice about hiring a young Moroccan boy that had a positive impact on him and his team:

“Super good boy. I think that he is one of the best employees that they have in Eindhoven, because he was hired and he is doing fantastic. And that helps sometimes indeed to hire someone like him in your team to show the others: ‘But cope on that way with that people. Speak them in another way’. That just help. And the nice thing is that the team does not talk on that way like: ‘It is always the Moroccans.’ You have now one of them in your own team what is a nice colleague. Thus, it is not all the Moroccan youth in Helmond (a city in The Netherlands) that cause problems. There are persons in Helmond that cause problems. And that difference you achieve only by showing and hiring to let it work.” (*Dutch translation*: “Supergoeie jongen. Ik denk dat het een van de beste medewerkers is die ze hebben in Eindhoven, want hij is aangenomen en hij doet het fantastisch. En dan helpt het juist soms om zo iemand in jouw team te hebben om anderen te laten zien van: ‘Maar ga op die manier met die mensen om. Spreek ze op een andere manier aan.’ Dat helpt gewoon. En het fijne is ook dat het team in ene niet meer op die manier gaan praten van: ‘Het zijn altijd Marokkanen.’ Je hebt er zelf eentje in je team zitten wat een hele fijne collega is. Dus het zijn niet alle Marokkaanse jongeren in Helmond die problemen veroorzaken. Er zijn personen in Helmond die problemen veroorzaken. En dat verschil bereik je alleen maar uiteindelijk door ook te laten zien en ook aan te laten nemen om het te laten werken.”)

The above quote illustrates that previous experience plays an important role in achieving diversity. Bad experiences about a certain diversity category will cause prejudices. These prejudices could result into less diversity, because it is conceivable that certain middle managers don't want to hire a person from a certain diversity group because of these prejudices. It is also conceivable that there will be conflicts between the employees because of these prejudices, which will result that diverse employees leave the organization. In case of good experiences, prejudices will disappear and persons change their behaviour and attitude towards a certain diversity category. Knowing this, public relation channels, ambassadors, conversations and diversity can be used to promote best practices. Achieving diversity is then much easier for a

middle manager. With regard to experiences, one middle manager with non-western background mentioned that also his background related experiences helped him to understand the different norms and values of persons and how to use this norms and values to achieve the operational targets of his department.

Managing diversity means investing time in (individual) employees. In other words, the ability and knowledge to manage a diverse team could also be achieved through conversations with (individual) employees. According to some middle managers, conversation with employees help them to understand their beliefs and behaviour. Therefore, middle managers are forced to ask deeper questions, because persons with non-western background are according to a middle manager not used to tell everything. In this conversation, the middle manager is not trying to change their culture but to help them overcome their challenges.

#### *More managerial involvement*

Organizations should involve middle managers in the construction of diversity policies according to some middle managers. This is obvious if we believe Herzig and Jimmerson (2006). They argue that middle managers are able to achieve more diversity in the organization, because they are able to influence the relationship between employees and the organization through influencing the emotions of employees, clarifying the scope of the change beforehand and taking the role of communication facilitator between the management and employees (Herzig and Jimmerson, 2006, p. 635-638). More managerial involvement means for the middle managers that they should be heard about their challenges in day-today practice with regard to diversity. Then this information can be used to make or adjust diversity policies and to take specific diversity actions. More managerial involvement is a way to deal with diversity policy implementation challenge rules and procedures. Involving middle managers to make diversity policy gives middle managers not more motivation to achieve diversity, because one middle manager was as HR policymaker involved in the development of anonymous application, but this involvement did not give her more awareness for diversity, because she was already motivated to achieve diversity. Another middle manager was involved in the development of a LGBT network. The only effect of this involvement was that he knew about the existence of the diversity department and diversity goals in contrast to other middle managers. His involvement in the network did not give him the feeling to put diversity even or above other operational targets and to make additional efforts to achieve diversity.

To summarize, middle managers mention seven diversity actions that could help them in the challenges they face in the implementation of diversity policies:

- Managerial and political pressure is necessary to create priority for diversity.
- When there is priority for diversity, then this priority should be maintained. This can be done via a tailor-made approach which means that diversity is approximated on small scale, via making diversity a standard agenda item in the management consultations, via public relation channels, ambassadors, conversations and diversity networks, via making middle managers accountable for their diversity efforts and via having a diversity department or diversity practitioner.
- Priority for diversity is not enough. Middle managers need diversity policy to achieve and maintain diversity. This policy should consist of a vision for diversity, should be sustainable, should be based on the whole organization, should give preferential right to a certain diversity group and should monitor diversity efforts.
- To diminish the challenge of demand side, mobility should be stimulated via internships, work experience jobs, temporal contracts and redundancy packages, via conversations with employees and via regrouping the team composition.
- To deal with the supply side challenges and improve the skill of middle managers for diversity management, networks should be used. These networks are institutions or organizations that know and help the minority, the diversity category itself and the network of employees in the organization.
- The skills and knowledge of the middle manager is one of the diversity implementation challenges. Diversity training, experiences and employee conversations are ways to improve the skill and knowledge of the middle manager.
- Giving middle managers more involvement helps to picture the diversity policy implementation challenges of middle managers in practice. Therefore, the middle managers should be heard about their challenges.



## Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

This study is conducted in order to contribute to the diversity theory by describing in this research context which challenges of diversity policy implementation middle managers encounter and how middle managers deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity. The following central question is answered to achieve this aim:

*Which challenges do middle managers describe in the implementation of diversity policies and how do middle managers think they should deal with these challenges to achieve the social justice and business case goals of diversity?*

### 5.1 Discussion

The theory about diversity policy implementation by the middle managers argues that middle managers face five challenges. First, middle managers are confused about the concept of diversity which makes that middle managers do not know their role in the implementation of diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 205). Second, middle managers are not trained and/or not trained appropriately for their diversity management responsibilities (CIPD, 2012a, p. 12). Third, the middle managers are not held accountable for their diversity actions (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Fourth, middle manager are less involved in the construction of diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Finally, middle managers give less priority to diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 207).

In this study, middle managers argue some new diversity policy implementation challenges in comparison with the challenges in the theory. They state that rules and procedures, factors on supply and demand side and lack of diversity management skills are inhibiting factors in the implementation of diversity policies. Only the diversity policy implementation challenge lack of priority from the theory is confirmed by the middle managers in this study. Concerning the reasons for lack of priority middle managers name some new reasons in comparison with the reasons in the theory. These new reasons are: diversity is less important for the middle managers if diversity goals are met, middle managers find it hard to combine operational and diversity responsibilities at the same time and socialization and internalization of organizations' norms and values has more priority for the middle managers than achieving a diverse team.

This study also describes middle managers' perceptions about the impact of the diversity element the way diversity management is done (first and second-order actions) on the implementation of diversity policies. According to Rees (1998) second-order actions stimulate

middle managers to succeed in their diversity responsibilities, because creating a culture of diversity stimulates persons with a broader range of characteristics to flourish (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 127). Middle managers argue in this study that a diversity-friendly culture also make middle managers more aware of diversity and it pushes them to continually achieve and maintain diversity. They also argue in this study in addition of Kezars' theory (2005) that second-order actions are effective if middle managers feel more involved in the construction of diversity policies and actions, because Kezars' theory (2005) indicates that second-order actions are effective if the management of an organization outline a shared vision, and the necessary structures and processes through achieving diverse workforce is facilitated (Kezar, 2005, p. 19-20). Middle managers also name some diversity actions to solve the diversity policy implementation challenges of the theory. The theory argues that middle managers are not trained and/or not trained appropriately for their diversity management responsibilities (CIPD, 2012a, p. 12). Middle managers in this study state which knowledge and training they need exactly to succeed in his/her diversity management responsibilities. Concerning the knowledge middle managers want to know and understand the norms and values of subordinates with non-western background, manage their own prejudices and prevent and manage conflicts. Regarding the training, middle managers want in-depth training, which means that they want to know how persons from a certain diversity category think and why they think like that. Besides, the theory argues that middle managers should be involved in the development of diversity policies (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). In this study, middle managers indicate to what extent they want to be involved in the development of diversity policies, namely middle managers want to be heard about their challenges in day-to-day practice with regard to diversity. Finally, the theory shows that missing accountability is one of the diversity policy implementation challenges (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Middle managers argue in this study that they need accountability for diversity to maintain priority for diversity. They also indicate that punishment for diversity outcomes is not desirable if their outcomes are not sufficient due to acceptable reasons, otherwise this will be at the expense of quality.

Based on the above insights the conclusion can be made that middle managers' perceptions about diversity policy implementation challenges and diversity actions contribute to the theory by providing new insights about the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers, reasons for lack of priority and the diversity element the way diversity management is done.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The devolution of some human resource responsibilities made middle managers responsible for the implementation of diversity policies. However, middle managers face several challenges during the implementation of diversity policies. Concerning the cause of these challenges middle managers leaning towards organizations' environment and organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization. However, the challenges also lies in the middle managers themselves. In order to deal with these challenges, middle managers want first and second-order actions. Middle managers need the latter actions to succeed in their diversity responsibilities, because then diversity is part of the organizational culture and thus integrated in the organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization. The existence of this diversity culture makes that middle managers maintain awareness for diversity and are pushed to take diversity actions. However, only a high degree of diversity integration is not enough, because middle managers should be involved in the diversity efforts of the organization, otherwise the middle managers' journey of diversity policy implementation will end badly.

With these insights, social science has better understanding of the middle managers role in the implementation of diversity policies, because more diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers are indicated, better declaration is given for some challenges in the theory and the required diversity actions are mentioned for successful implementation of diversity policies by the middle manager.

## **5.3 Theoretical and practical recommendations**

### *Theoretical recommendations*

Based on the insights of this study some suggestions are made for further research.

The insights of this study are additional to the existing theory of diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers. Besides, to some extent this study confirms the existing theory. The existing theory and the insights of this study should be used to conduct a quantitative study in the Netherlands in order to test both theories. Within this quantitative study, it is possible to test the impact of the two elements of diversity management (the normative context of diversity management and the way diversity management is done), because less research is done on the impact of these two elements on the implementation of diversity policies by the middle managers (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 206). Knowing that context is decisive for diversity (Kirton and Greene, 2016, p. 7-8), the quantitative study can

also test the influence of organizational size for the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers, because organizational size has influence on the diversity policy implementation (Witkamp et al., 2016). For instance, in small organizations less time and effort is taken to integrate diversity in the organization, because the diversity practioner combines the diversity responsibilities with his/her regular job tasks (Witkamp et al., 2016, p. 62).

Another suggestion for further research is to study the diversity implementation challenges by middle managers in the diversity category disability and sexual orientation. Several middle managers mentioned in this study that they face challenges with recruiting persons with disability that fits the job requirements. Besides, the study of Witkamp et al. (2016) shows that the challenges of diversity category sexual orientation differ from the other diversity categories (Witkamp et al., 2016, p. 36). LGBT employees experience more often unsafe working atmosphere, and have a higher degree of absenteeism because of conflicts with colleagues. Besides, their job satisfaction is lower because of less job security (Witkamp et al., 2016) p. 32-33). A qualitative research should be conducted to describe the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers in the diversity category disability and sexual orientation, because a qualitative study describes the diversity policy implementation challenges by the middle managers in greater depth and thus fills the theory gap.

#### *Practical recommendations*

Middle managers reveal in this study that they face some challenges in the implementation of diversity policies. In order to deal with these challenges, practical recommendations are made to the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS and the middle managers.

#### *Municipality of Nijmegen and NS*

Some recommendations are made to stimulate the Municipality of Nijmegen and NS in achieving their diversity goals.

First, the diversity practioner should create priority for diversity via collaborating with the top managers and politicians, like the HR alderman in the case of the Municipality of Nijmegen.

Second, diversity results should be depicted on department level to achieve and maintain priority under the middle managers. The diversity practioner should make this analysis.

Third, the diversity policy should value individual and group-based differences rather than value equality and it should at least consist of mentioning what diversity means for the

organization, what the purpose of achieving diversity is and how the organization wants to achieve diversity. The diversity policy should be constructed by a (diversity) policy maker.

Fourth, organizations' underlying values or missions, culture, functioning process, and structure of the organization should be evaluated continually on diversity. The (diversity) policy maker and diversity practioner should do this.

Fifth, the (diversity) policy maker should appoint diversity ambassadors for supporting the middle managers in their diversity responsibilities.

Sixth, diversity should be an item in the management consultations and performance appraisal to create and maintain priority for diversity. Concerning the performance appraisal middle managers should not be punished if their outcomes are not sufficient due to acceptable reasons. This action should be initiated by the supervisor of the middle managers.

Seventh, the HR departments should take actions to stimulate mobility via internships, work experience jobs, redundancy packages and temporal jobs.

Eight, the diversity practioner should create networks with institutions and organizations that support the minorities, the diversity category itself and the employees of the organization.

Ninth, the diversity practioner should organize constantly diversity training that deals with the issue of what diversity management means for the everyday job of the middle manager and how practice needs to change. For instance, the training should pay attention to the way of doing and thinking of a certain diversity category and why they do and think like that, because then middle managers know how to act in certain circumstances.

Tenth, the (diversity) policy maker should involve the middle managers in the construction of diversity policies. Their perceptions and experiences in day-to-day practice should be heard by the policy maker in order to make new diversity policies or to adjust the current diversity policies.

### *Middle managers*

Some recommendations are made to stimulate the middle manager in their diversity responsibilities.

First, middle managers should work together with diversity professionals and ambassadors, institutions and organizations that support the minorities, the diversity category itself and the network of employees in the organization to succeed in their diversity responsibilities.

Second, middle managers should initiate conversations about diversity in the management consultations.

Third, middle managers should follow constantly diversity training that deals with the issue of what diversity management mean for the everyday job of the middle manager or how practice needs to change.

Fourth, middle managers should organize diversity workshops and training for their department.

## References

- ABP. (2017). *Werkgeverspiegel: Gemeente Nijmegen*. Author.
- Adelmeijer, M., Schenderling, P., Kok, J., Sikkema, F., and Vloet, H. (2014). *Businesscases inzet mensen met een arbeidsbeperking vanuit vier perspectieven*. Retrieved June 11, 2017, from Samen voor de klant:  
[https://www.samenvoordeklant.nl/sites/default/files/bestandsbijlage/businesscases-berenschot-awvn\\_1.pdf](https://www.samenvoordeklant.nl/sites/default/files/bestandsbijlage/businesscases-berenschot-awvn_1.pdf)
- Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., and Jackson, J. F. L. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education?. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1-17.
- Aguirre, A., and Martinez, R. O. (2006). Diversity Leadership in Higher Education. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report* 32 (3). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- American Psychological Association. (2002). *Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists*. In Lau Chin, J., Desormeaux, L., and Sawyer, K. (2016). Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(1), 49-71.
- Baarda, B. (2009). *Dit is onderzoek!*. Groningen/Houten: Noordhoff Uitgevers BV.
- Baarda, B., Bakker, E., Fischer, T., Julsing, M., Peters, V., Van der Velden, T., and De Goede, M. (2013). *Basisboek Kwalitatief Onderzoek: Handleiding voor het opzetten en uitvoeren van kwalitatief onderzoek*. Groningen/Houten: Noordhoff Uitgevers BV.
- Bass, B. M., and R. E. Riggio. (2006). *Transformational Leadership*. In Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., and Jackson, J. F. L. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education?. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1-17.
- Benschop, Y. (2016). *Slide class 2* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved March 2, 2017, from Blackboard:  
[https://blackboard.ru.nl/webapps/blackboard/execute/content/file?cmd=view&content\\_id=\\_2574914\\_1&course\\_id=\\_111767\\_1&framesetWrapped=true](https://blackboard.ru.nl/webapps/blackboard/execute/content/file?cmd=view&content_id=_2574914_1&course_id=_111767_1&framesetWrapped=true)
- Bleijenbergh, I. (2015). *Kwalitatief onderzoek in organisaties* (2e druk). Den Haag: Boom Lemma Uitgevers.

- CBS. (2016). *Arbeidsdeelname; herkomst*. Retrieved January 31, 2017, from CBS:  
<http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=82809NED&D1=a&D2=0&D3=0&D4=0-9&D5=39,44,49,54,59,64,1&HDR=G4,G3&STB=G1,G2,T&VW=T>
- CBS. (2017). *Arbeidsdeelname en werkloosheid per maand*. Retrieved January 31, 2017, from CBS: <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=80590NED&D1=3-7,10-14&D2=0&D3=1-2&D4=162-181&HDR=T&STB=G1,G2,G3&VW=T>
- CIPD. (2007). *Diversity in Business: A Focus for Progress*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).
- CIPD. (2012a). *Diversity and inclusion – fringe or fundamental?*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).
- DiStefano, J. J., and Maznevski, M. L. (2000). Creating value with diverse teams in global management. In Vanderbroeck, P., and Wasserfallen, J. B. (2017). Managing gender diversity in healthcare: getting it right. *Leadership in Health Services*, 30(1), 92-100.
- Durlak, J. A., and Dupre, E. P. (2008). Implementation Matters: A Review of Research on the Influence of Implementation on Program Outcomes and the Factors Affecting Implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 327-350.
- Finkelman, J., and Lopez, P. D. (2012). Global consulting in a cultural diverse world: Ethical and legal implications. In Lau Chin, J., Desormeaux, L., and Sawyer, K. (2016). Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(1), 49-71.
- Foster, C., and Harris, L. (2005). Easy to say, difficult to do: diversity management in retail. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15(3), 4-17.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (n.d.). *Gemeente*. Retrieved March 9, 2017, from Gemeente Nijmegen: <http://www2.nijmegen.nl/gemeente/>
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2008a). *Rapportage ‘anonimiseren van sollicitatiebrieven’: Evaluatie eerste en tweede meeting*. Municipality of Nijmegen.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2017). *Sociaal jaarverslag 2016*. Retrieved May 3, 2017, from Gemeente Nijmegen: <http://www.sociaaljaarverslag2016.nl/>
- Gilbert, J., and Ivancevich, J. (2000). ‘Valuing diversity: a tale of two organisations’. In Kirton, G., Robertson, M., and Avdelidou-Fischer, N. (2016). Valuing and value in diversity: the policy-implementation gap in an IT firm. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26(3), 321-336.



- Greene, A. M., and Kirton, G. (2009). *Diversity management in the UK*. In Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Heffels, M. A. H. (2016). *Raadsbesluit Politieke Avond 16 november 2016*. Municipality of Nijmegen.
- Herzig, S. E., and Jimmieson, N. L. (2006). Middle managers' uncertainty management during organizational change. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 27(8), 628-645.
- Hillman, A. J., Shropshire, C., Albert, J., and Cannella, A. (2007). Organizational predictors of women on corporate boards. In Saeed, A., Belghitar, Y., and Yousaf, A. (2016). Firm-level determinants of gender diversity in the boardrooms: Evidence from some emerging markets. *International Business Review*, 25(5), 1076-1088.
- Hunt, V., Layton, D., and Prince, S. (2015). *Diversity matters*. McKinsey.
- Jann, W., and Wegrich, K. (2007). Theories of the policy cycle. *Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics and methods*, 43-62.
- Janssens, M., and Zanoni, P. (2005). Many diversities for many services: Theorizing diversity (management) in service companies. *Human Relations*, 58(3), 311-340.
- Jones, A. (2006). *Rising to the challenge of diversity: A discussion of the business case*. Work Foundation.
- Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., and Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies. *American sociological review*, 71(4), 589-617.
- Kandola, R., and Fullerton, J. (1998). *Managing Diversity in the workplace*. In Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Kezar, A. J. (2001). Understanding and Facilitating Organizational Change in the 21st Century: Recent Research and Conceptualizations. In Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., and Jackson, J. F. L. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education?. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1-17.
- Kezar, A. (2005). What campuses need to know about organizational learning and the learning organization. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2005(131), 7-22.
- Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2009). The costs and opportunities of doing diversity work in mainstream organisations. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 19(2), 159-175.

- Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Kirton, G., Robertson, M., and Avdelidou-Fischer, N. (2016). Valuing and value in diversity: the policy-implementation gap in an IT firm. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26(3), 321-336.
- Krawiec, K. D. (2003). Cosmetic compliance and the failure of negotiated governance. *Wash. ULQ*, 81, 487-544.
- Kremser, W. (n.d.). *Forms of Responsible Organizing: Diversity Management* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved February 12, 2017, from Blackboard:  
[https://blackboard.ru.nl/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course\\_id=\\_111819\\_1&content\\_id=\\_2689337\\_1](https://blackboard.ru.nl/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=_111819_1&content_id=_2689337_1)
- Lau Chin, J., Desormeaux, L., and Sawyer, K. (2016). Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(1), 49-71.
- Levy, A., and Merry, U. (1986). *Organizational Transformation: Approaches, Strategies, Theories*. In Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., and Jackson, J. F. L. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education?. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1-17.
- Liff, S., and Wajcman, J. (1996). "Sameness" and "difference" revisited: which way forward for equal opportunities initiatives?. In Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Lowman, R. L. (Ed.). (2013). *Internationalizing multiculturalism: Expanding professional competencies in a globalized world*. In Lau Chin, J., Desormeaux, L., and Sawyer, K. (2016). Making way for paradigms of diversity leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(1), 49-71.
- NS. (2016a). *NS Jaarverslag 2016*. Retrieved June 16, 2017, from NS:  
[http://www.nsjaarverslag.nl/FbContent.ashx/pub\\_1000/Downloads/NS-jaarverslag-2016.pdf](http://www.nsjaarverslag.nl/FbContent.ashx/pub_1000/Downloads/NS-jaarverslag-2016.pdf)
- NS. (2016b). *Diversiteit en inclusie*. Retrieved June 5, 2017, from NS:  
[http://www.nsjaarverslag.nl/jaarverslag-2016/CSearch.diversiteit/a1144\\_Diversiteit-en-inclusie](http://www.nsjaarverslag.nl/jaarverslag-2016/CSearch.diversiteit/a1144_Diversiteit-en-inclusie)
- Pasaribu, P. (2015). *The examinations of board chairman characteristics and board diversity: evidence from the UK listed firms* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds).

- People Business. (2015). *Diversiteitsmanagement volgens de NS: creëer focusgroepen*. Retrieved June 5, 2017, from People Business: <https://peoplebusiness.nl/artikelen/hr-trends/diversiteitmanagement-volgens-de-ns-creeer-focusgroepen>
- Rees, T. (1998). *Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, Training and Labour Market Policies*. In Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Richard, O. C. (2000). Racial diversity, business strategy, and firm performance: A resource-based view. *Academy of management journal*, 43(2), 164-177.
- Rijksoverheid. (2015). *Meer dan 10.000 banen voor mensen met arbeidsbeperking*. Retrieved January 31, 2017, from Rijksoverheid: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/participatiewet/nieuws/2015/07/04/meer-dan-tienduizend-extra-banen-voor-mensen-met-arbeidsbeperking>
- Rijksoverheid. (n.d.). *Culturele diversiteit op de werkvloer*. Retrieved February 2, 2017, from Rijksoverheid: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/gelijke-behandeling-op-het-werk/inhoud/culturele-diversiteit-werkvloer>
- Saeed, A., Belghitar, Y., and Yousaf, A. (2016). Firm-level determinants of gender diversity in the boardrooms: Evidence from some emerging markets. *International Business Review*, 25(5), 1076-1088.
- Swanborn, P. G. (2013). *Case studies: Wat, wanneer en hoe?* (5<sup>th</sup> edition). Den Haag: Boom Lemma Uitgevers.
- Symon, G., & Cassell, C. (2012). *Qualitative Organizational Research: core methods and current challenges* (1<sup>st</sup> edition). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Tomlinson, F., and Schwabenland, C. (2010). Reconciling competing discourses of diversity? The UK non-profit sector between social justice and the business case. *Organization*, 17(1), 101-121.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851.
- Vanderbroeck, P, and Wasserfallen, J. B. (2017). Managing gender diversity in healthcare: getting it right. *Leadership in Health Services*, 30(1), 92-100.
- Van Beek, A., and Hendrikse, W. (2015). *Goede voorbeelden culturele diversiteit: En ‘good principles’ toegepast in de praktijk*. Retrieved February 2, 2017, from Rijksoverheid: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/gelijke-behandeling-op-het->

werk/documenten/rapporten/2015/09/01/goede-voorbeelden-culturele-diversiteit-en-good-principles-toegepast-in-de-praktijk

- Van Immerzeel, M. (2017). Hoe blind is anoniem solliciteren?. *Opzij*, 3, 50-54.
- Webb, J. (1997). The politics of equal opportunity. In Kirton, G., and Greene, A. (2016). *The dynamics of managing diversity: A critical approach* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Williams, D. A. (2013). *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education*. In Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., and Jackson, J. F. L. (2016). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education?. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1-17.
- Witkamp, B., Van der Woude, F., & Klaver, J. (2016). *Diversiteit in Bedrijf: overzichtsstudie*. Regioplan beleidsonderzoek.
- Work Foundation. (2006). *Rising to the Challenge of Diversity: A Discussion of the Business Case*. In Tomlinson, F., and Schwabenland, C. (2010). Reconciling competing discourses of diversity? The UK non-profit sector between social justice and the business case. *Organization*, 17(1), 101-121.
- Zanoni, P., and Janssens, M. (2004). Deconstructing Difference: The Rhetoric of Human Resource Managers' Diversity Discourses. *Organization Studies*, 25(1), 55-74.

# *Appendix*

---

## Annex 1a: Example research invitation mail to middle managers of the Municipality of Nijmegen

HS di 28-2-2017 14:47  
Aankondiging onderzoek diversiteit en verzoek tot medewerking

Aan [REDACTED]  
Bcc [REDACTED]

Beste leidinggevende,

Ik zal mij allereerst voorstellen. Ik ben Hassan Shakeri. In het kader van mijn masterstudie Bedrijfskunde doe ik namens gemeente Nijmegen een onderzoek naar diversiteit. Hierbij focus ik mij op de implementatierol van de middenmanager, omdat er wetenschappelijk en praktisch weinig over dit fenomeen bekend is. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zal door gemeente Nijmegen gebruikt worden voor het diversiteitsbeleid, dat naar aanleiding van het verzoek van de gemeenteraad tot stand komt.

Voor mijn onderzoek heb ik naast gemeente Nijmegen twee andere bedrijven benaderd. Het verschil tussen gemeente Nijmegen en de twee andere bedrijven is dat de twee bedrijven een formeel diversiteitsbeleid hebben. Echter uit een analyse van het personeelsbestand blijkt dat gemeente Nijmegen in sommige plaatsen een divers personeelsbestand heeft en dus ondanks afwezigheid van een formeel diversiteitsbeleid wel degelijk aandacht heeft voor diversiteit.

Daarnaast is diversiteit een heel breed begrip. Voor mijn onderzoek focus ik mij op geslacht, etniciteit en leeftijd. In geval van gemeente Nijmegen focus ik mij op verdeling man/vrouw en leeftijd. Naar aanleiding van een analyse van het personeelsbestand ontdekte ik naar verhouding een scheve verdeling tussen man en vrouw in een aantal afdelingen, waaronder die van jou. Hierbij ga ik vanuit dat in deze afdelingen het focus ligt op het gelijker krijgen van deze verhouding (voor zover dat mogelijk is). Dus voor mijn onderzoek is het belangrijk dat je als leidinggevende bewust bezig bent met het aannemen van man of vrouw in je afdeling om de verdeling enigszins gelijk te trekken, wetende dat geschiktheid de belangrijkste eis is.

Voldoe je aan het profiel leidinggevende dat ik zojuist heb geschetst, dan zou ik bij dezen je medewerking willen vragen voor mijn onderzoek. Mijn onderzoek bestaat uit een interviewgesprek van maximaal 1 uur.


Mocht je naar aanleiding van mijn mail aanvullende vragen hebben, dan hoor ik dat graag.

Graag hoor ik van je of je wil deelnemen aan mijn onderzoek.

Alvast bedankt.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Hassan Shakeri

GEMEENTE  Nijmegen

## Annex 1b: Example research invitation mail to NS

### *Mail to the Program Manager Diversity and Inclusion*




di 21-3-2017 13:31

Hassan Shakeri

RE: Onderzoek implementatie diversiteit

[Redacted]

 U hebt dit bericht beantwoord op 3-4-2017 21:08.

[Redacted]

Naar aanleiding van ons telefoongesprek mail ik je nadere informatie over mijn onderzoek.

Ik heb mij natuurlijk aan jou al voorgesteld, maar wellicht toch goed om mij nogmaals voor te stellen indien andere mijn mail toegestuurd krijgen. Ik ben Hassan Shakeri. In het kader van mijn masterstudie Bedrijfskunde doe ik namens gemeente Nijmegen een onderzoek naar diversiteit. Hierbij focus ik mij op de implementatierol van de middenmanagers (in het geval van NS, de teammanagers), dit omdat er wetenschappelijk en praktisch weinig over dit fenomeen bekend is.

Veel specifiekier, in mijn onderzoek wil ik achterhalen welke uitdagingen middenmanagers tegenkomen in de uitvoering van het diversiteitsbeleid. En het kan zo zijn dat die uitdagingen geen problemen meer vormen en dan ben ik benieuwd hoe er in de uitvoering van het diversiteitbeleid is gehandeld.

Diversiteit is een heel breed begrip. In mijn onderzoek focus ik mij op geslacht, etniciteit en leeftijd. Ook is het belangrijk dat de teammanager bewust bezig is met de uitvoering van het diversiteitsbeleid, bijvoorbeeld de teammanager is bewust bezig om zijn/haar teamsamenstelling divers te maken door mensen met diverse achtergrond (geslacht, etniciteit en leeftijd) aan te nemen, wetende dat geschiktheid de belangrijkste eis is.

Mijn idee is maximaal 5 teammanagers van NS te betrekken bij het onderzoek in de vorm van een interview van maximaal 1 uur.

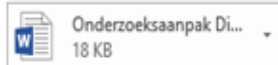
Ik hoop met deze e-mail mijn intenties (voor zover dat mogelijk is via de e-mail) duidelijk te hebben gemaakt. Mocht je toch nog vragen hebben dan hoor ik dat graag.

Graag verneem ik van je.

Met vriendelijke groet,

*Mail to middle managers NS*

vr 7-4-2017 14:37



Beste teammanager,

Ik zal mij allereerst voorstellen. Ik ben Hassan Shakeri. In het kader van mijn masterstudie Bedrijfskunde aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen doe ik een onderzoek naar diversiteit. Als personeelsmanager in opleiding heb ik ervaren dat het middenmanagement met uitdagingen te maken heeft als het gaat om het uitvoeren van het diversiteitsbeleid. Wetenschappelijke onderzoeken hebben een aantal uitdagingen van middenmanagers aangetoond in de Verenigd Koninkrijk. In deze onderzoeken is ook aangegeven dat deze uitdagingen per land verschillen vanwege politieke, sociale en economische omstandigheden van dat land. Een eerder onderzoek van de Ministerie van SZW heeft aangetoond dat middenmanagers een cruciale rol hebben in het slagen van diversiteit. Om deze redenen gaat mijn onderzoek in op de vraag hoe het middenmanagement in Nederland zijn implementerende rol oppakt en welke uitdagingen zij in de uitvoering tegenkomen. Dit onderzoek doe ik in opdracht van gemeente Nijmegen. Om een nog completer beeld te krijgen van het probleem, heb ik ook NS benaderd voor mijn onderzoek, want via hetzelfde onderzoek van de Ministerie van SZW heb ik vernomen dat NS met diversiteit bezig is.

Een specifieke aanpak is genomen om het doel van het onderzoek te bereiken. Hierbij is gekozen voor een interview van maximaal 1 uur. In de bijlage leg ik de gekozen onderzoeksrapport nader uit.

Via deze mail hoop ik je (voor zover mogelijk) voldoende te hebben geïnformeerd. Mocht je toch nog vragen hebben, dan kan je mij te allen tijde benaderen via onderstaande contactgegevens.

Ten slotte wil ik je alvast bedanken voor je deelname aan mijn onderzoek.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Hassan Shakeri





**Annex 2: Interview guide**



**Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen**

**DIVERSE  
WORKFORCE: THE  
IMPLEMENTING  
MIDDLE MANAGER**  
*Interview guide*

Hassan Shakeri, master student Business  
Administration at Radboud University  
Nijmegen

**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL:**

**ENGLISH VERSION - MARCH 2017**

**The research focus is on:**

- The interviews deliver input for analyses of the experiences and perceptions of middle managers in implementing diversity policies. The interview themes are leading issues during the conversations. Some questions have specific topics. These specific topics can be used as support material if the conversations don't go as planned or as an extra check to see if all arguments are discussed.
- The grey column contains the central concepts from a theoretical point of view. It also contains the aim of the questions.

## **THE INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Introduction**

Before starting the interview, we want to thank you for your time. I am a student of the Master Business Administration at the Radboud University of Nijmegen. To complete my master degree, I conduct a research about the challenges that middle managers face in the implementation of diversity policies. I interview herefore several middle mangers. The research is conducted with approval of Petra Kalkman (Manager of department HRM policy at the Municiplaity of Nijmegen). The research is supervised by prof. dr. Yvonne Benschop, Business Administration, Faculty of Management at Radboud University Nijmegen.

The interviews will take maximum one hour and will be only recorded after permission by the research participants. This recording is needed to make precise interpretation and to achieve precise results. The interview results will only be used for scientific research in accordance with the guidelines of proper social scientific research and will not be traceable to the research participants.

The results of the interview will be used for this research and the construction of a diversity policy for the Municiplaity of Nijmegen. The interview results will remain the possession of the Radboud University and will only be available for third parties after permission. This research report will be assessed by the supervisor and a second examiner from Radboud University Nijmegen.

In this research, I am studying the diversity policy implementation challenges of the middle managers. To achieve the goal of this research, I conduct interviews with middle managers. In this interview it is your opinion that counts. After some introductory question about your department, I will ask for the organizations' and yours opnion on diversity, the challenges that you faced in the implementation of diversity policies and the way you dealt with these challenges. Besides, there is an opportunity for additional remarks from your side.

**Topic list**

Number interview: Date interview: Time interview:  Name interviewer(s): Position interviewee: Write down sex interviewee: male / female
---

**Theme 1: Background information (department):**

If you do not have any questions at this moment, I want to start with questions on your current department.

Topics (questions) max 2 minutes	Comment
1. Which department do you supervise? 2. What are the main tasks in this department? 3. What kind of qualifications is required for these tasks?	This part is an introduction, in order to get the interviewee and the interviewer in the right mindset. It also gives insight into the department of the middle manager. This will result to a better understanding of the context.

**Theme 2: Diversity in the organization**

Now I want to ask you some question about the organizations’ beliefs on diversity.

Topics (questions) max 5 minutes	Comment
1) Why is diversity important for the organization? 2) Which effort is already undertaken by the organization to achieve a diverse workforce? <i>The next specific topics could be used for question 2:</i> a) Does the organization have diversity policies? b) Does the organization have action plans and goals for diversity? c) Does the organization have diversity practitioners or diversity department? d) Does the organization have a diversity committee that manage diversity actions and monitor the progress?	This theme gives more information about the beliefs of the organization on diversity. It gives a sketch of the importance of business case and social justice reasoning for the organization and if the organization

<p>e) Does the organization monitor diversity outcomes?          f) What do these actions meant for your everyday job?          3) Which other efforts should the organization take in the future to achieve a diverse workforce?</p>	<p>undertakes first- and/or second-order actions to achieve a diverse workforce. This will result to a better understanding of the context.</p>
---	---

**Theme 3: Diversity in the department**

After having a description of organizations’ beliefs on diversity, I would like to ask you some question about your beliefs on diversity.

<p><b>Topics (questions) max 5 minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Comment</b></p>
<p>1. What does diversity mean to you?  <i>The next specific topics could be used for question 1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To what extend is diversity for you embracing equal opportunities?</li> <li>b. To what extend is diversity for you embracing individual differences?</li> <li>c. To what extend is diversity for you embracing group differences?</li> </ul> <p>2. How this point of view did or did not helped you to achieve a diverse workforce?          3. Which knowledge do you have about diversity management?          4. How do you have to report about diversity in your department?          5. To who do you have to report about diversity in your department?          6. How often do you have to report about diversity in your department?          7. Why does your department need diversity in your opinion?          8. Which diversity categories are important in your department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Why are these diversity categories important for your department?</li> </ul> <p>9. How are diversity policies created in the organization?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What was your role during the creation of these diversity policies?</li> </ul>	<p>This theme gives more information about the beliefs of the middle managers on diversity. It gives a sketch of the importance of business case and social justice reasoning for the middle manager and if the middle manager undertakes first- and/or second-order actions to achieve a diverse workforce. This will result to a better understanding of the context.</p>

**Theme 4: Diversity challenges faced by middle managers**

I will now ask some questions about the challenges you face in achieving diverse workforce based on gender, age and ethnicity.

Topics (questions) max 24 minutes	Comment
<p>1. What kind of challenges did you face with achieving diversity in your department?</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. Why did you face these challenges?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>The next specific topics could be used for question 1a:</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">i. What role played confusion about the concept diversity play a role in this?</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">ii. What role played your knowledge about diversity management a role in this?</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">iii. What role played the missing accountability a role in this?</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">iv. What role played less involvement in constructing diversity policies a role in this?</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">v. What role played your work priority in diversity a role in this?</p> <p style="padding-left: 60px;">vi. Which other reasons played a role in this?</p> <p>2. What kind of actions did you take to achieve diversity?</p> <p>3. What was the results of these actions?</p> <p>4. Why did these actions not work?</p> <p>5. What did you need to make these actions successful?</p>	<p>Perceptions and experiences about the challenges that middle managers face in implementing diversity policies.</p> <p>This theme is important in order to gain insight in the views and position of the middle managers, which are important for the way of questioning during the rest of the interview.</p> <p>In this theme the five challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers and the two elements of diversity management is taking into account.</p> <p>This theme should result into challenges that middle managers face in the implementation of diversity policies.</p>

**Theme 5: Best practices middle managers dealing with diversity policy implementation challenges**

I will now ask some questions about how you dealt with challenges to achieve a diverse workforce based on gender, age and ethnicity.

Topics (questions ) max 24 minutes	Comment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did you already achieved with regard to diverse workforce in your department?</li> <li>2. How did you do these?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Which actions did you used to achieve this?</li> <li>b. What kind of actions is offered you by the organization to achieve this?                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do these actions meant for your everyday job?</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> <li>3. What are the advantages of your diverse team?</li> <li>4. What kind of differences did you see within different diversity categories?</li> <li>5. How do you manage these differences?</li> </ol>	<p>Perceptions and experiences about the challenges that middle managers face in implementing diversity policies.</p> <p>This theme is important in order to gain insight in the views and position of the middle managers, which are important for the way of questioning during the rest of the interview.</p> <p>In this theme the five challenges of diversity policy implementation by the middle managers and the two elements of diversity management is taking into account.</p> <p>This theme should result into challenges that middle managers face in the implementation of diversity policies.</p>

This is the end of the interview. Are there any subjects which were not adressed in the interview and what would you like to discuss?

I want to stress that all information of the interview will be dealt with anonymously. I thank you very much for your cooperation and the time you made available for my study.

### Annex 3: Results preliminary investigation of the team composition in departments of the Municipality of Nijmegen

<b>Analyse op leeftijd gemeente Nijmegen</b>					
Bureau (OE)	tot 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-67
PenO Beleid	0	7	0	2	6
Backoffice WMO/Jeugd	0	5	4	8	6
Beleidsontwikkeling	0	8	14	14	12
Documentaire Informatievoorziening	0	2	1	6	22
Facilitaire Zaken	0	7	3	13	48

<b>Analyse op gender gemeente Nijmegen</b>		
Bureau (OE)	Man	Vrouw
Bedrijfsondersteuning (VA10)	3	9
Communicatie (BA50)	6	17
Coördinatiepunt (VA05)	1	6
Griffie (BM50)	1	6
Inkomensondersteuning A (ZI20)	4	16
Inkomensondersteuning B (ZI30)	3	15
Inventarisatie (AR10)	10	3
Jeugd en Jongerencentra (VA33)	4	10
Leefomgevingskwaliteit (PK40)	22	9
Leerplicht (ZI40)	4	17
Onderzoek en Statistiek (BA30)	5	2
Ontwikkeling IenA (PI50)	13	2
Parkeren en Verkeersmanagement (SB60)	19	6
PenO Services (PI30)	7	22
Proces en Projectmanagement (PK10)	20	6
Publieksdienstverlening (PU10)	2	22
Publieksinformatie (PU40)	4	14
Ruimtelijke Planvorming (PK30)	16	5
Schuldhelpverlening B (ZI60)	2	17
Sport Stedelijk (VA52)	7	2
Straatcoaches (MB31)	8	0
Strategie (BA40)	1	6
Toezicht en Handhaving (MB30)	40	9
Uitkeringsbeheer B	5	15
Veiligheid (VH10)	6	19
Voorzieningshart (VA32)	9	4
Wijk- en Stadservice (SB20)	32	4
Wijkmanagement (WM00)	5	17



WMO A (ZIA0)	5	17
--------------	---	----

<b>Analyse op etniciteit gemeente Nijmegen</b>		
<b>Bureau (OE)</b>	<b>Migratie</b>	<b>Geen migratie</b>
Bedrijfsadministratie	7	34
Documentaire informatievoorziening	8	23
Facilitaire Zaken	12	59
Gemeentebelastingen	8	29
Inkomensondersteuning A	6	14
Publieksdienstverlening	7	17
Schuldhelpverlening A (ZI50)	6	13
Uitkeringsadministratie (ZI90)	9	20
Straatcoaches (MB31)	5	3

Annex 4: Table analyzing research data

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Data collection analysis							
2	Context department	Normative context of diversity management	The way diversity management is done	Diversity policy implementation challenges				
3	Research participants	Department	Business case and social justice reasoning	First-order and second-order changes	Challenges	Dealing with challenges		
		<p>1. The department PerO Services consist of operational HR tasks, such as administration, secretarial tasks and operational tasks related to recruitment and selection.</p> <p>2. In general, a lot of people apply for the vacancies of PerO Services.</p> <p>3. Senior secondary vocational education (mbo in Dutch) level is required.</p> <p>4. My subordinates would like to have more men employees in their team to achieve a more gender-balanced department.</p>	<p>1. Diversity should be used as means to achieve better organizational performance. Therefore, diversity is about group differences like gender, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability, and about individual differences such as abilities, knowledge and behaviour.</p> <p>2. The individual differences are more important, because different abilities, knowledge and behaviour in the workforce will result to better organizational performance.</p>	<p>1. The municipality of Nijmegen finds diversity important. However, this importance fluctuates. For instance, in the nineties the municipality did some second-order changes by hiring policy makers for emancipation and GLBT. However this functions disappeared because diversity was not important anymore. Besides, in the nineties women, people with non-western background and disable people had a preferred position for vacancies, which is a first-order change.</p> <p>2. There is less awareness about diversity in the Municipality of Nijmegen. For instance, for the first round of trainee program we hired seven trainees with the same characteristics. They were white, extinsic and were scientific researchers (wo'ers in Dutch). This unawareness can also be seen in other HR processes and instruments.</p> <p>3. The shared vision about the added value of diversity is missing among the (line) managers, because not for all the (line) managers are diversity targets equally important as operational targets.</p> <p>4. The municipality offer training about diversity leadership. However, the managers should take the initiative to sign for this training. Some managers do and some not.</p>	<p>1. Operational targets and the context of a department are more important for the line managers in comparison with diversity targets.</p> <p>2. It is difficult to define the right candidate for my team in advance. This definition is more clear afterwards.</p> <p>3. The operational target and the context of the departments make that the line managers fall back on the old trusted pattern and do not think more deeper about how to achieve diversity.</p> <p>4. The low internal mobility of the workers in the municipality makes it hard to achieve a diverse workforce. This is particularly the case in the operational positions and/or departments.</p> <p>5. Less knowledge about other cultures make diversity management harder.</p>	<p>1. Managers should be more aware of diversity by evaluating their execution of HR policies on diversity goals.</p> <p>2. We should train all the managers for diversity.</p> <p>3. The municipality should provide work-experience job for the minority. This should be done via a project, because than all the departments are forced to work on the project.</p> <p>4. The municipality should build networks with people and organizations that know and help the minorities.</p> <p>5. Diversity should be part of performance appraisal to achieve more awareness of the line managers. Therefore the diversity of the workforce in numbers should be outlined per department.</p>		
		<p>1. The department Schuldverlening exist of 7 different positions. All these positions have the goal to make inhabitants debt-free in three years</p>	<p>1. The abilities of a person is the most important thing. In the second place, the group differences of diversity is important.</p> <p>2. The municipality should consider diversity to reflect society.</p>	<p>1. In the past women and disabled people had a preferred position in the municipality of Nijmegen.</p> <p>2. In the past the municipality did also a test with</p>	<p>1. I am not aware of achieving a diverse team.</p> <p>2. I have less men worker in my</p>	<p>1. Preventive actions could work to achieve diversity as long as the abilities of people are considered as the most important.</p>		

